

Historic Kansas City Foundation:  
A Study of Public Relations with  
Urban Neighborhood Organizations

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgement.....	i
Table of Contents.....	ii
List of Tables.....	v
Chapter 1	
The Role of Public Relations in Preservation Organizations.....	1
Notes.....	6
Chapter 2	
The Communication of Preservation Ideals in Neighborhoods.....	7
Preservation in Urban Neighborhoods.....	8
Urban Neighborhoods Since 1960.....	10
The Image of Preservation and The Issue of Displacement.....	13
Causes of Displacement.....	14
Stages of Public Opinion and Historic Preservation.....	17
Private and Public Aid to Preservation Programs.....	18
Preserving the Urban Housing Stock.....	21
Defining Residents' Needs and Perceptions.....	24
Notes.....	30
Chapter 3	
Public Relations and the Public Image of Preservation.....	33
The Activities of Public Communication.....	34
The Image of Historic Preservation.....	38
The Image and Neighborhood Preservation.....	40
Notes.....	43

## **Chapter 4**

Historic Kansas City Foundation's Public Relations Activities.....	44
Existing Public Relations Programs.....	46

## **Chapter 5**

Determining Needs and Perceptions In Kansas City Neighborhoods.....	50
The Questionnaire.....	51
Analysis of Data.....	59
Awareness of and Interest in Historic Buildings.....	60
Important Priorities in Kansas City Neighborhoods.....	62
Neighborhood Interests and Issues.....	64
Displacement as an Issue.....	68
Knowledge of Preservation and Preservation Organizations.....	69
Extended Public Relations Studies.....	72
Notes.....	76

## **Chapter 6**

A Neighborhood Preservation Program Proposal.....	77
H.K.C.F.'s Public Relations: Strengths and Weaknesses.....	79
Neighborhood Preservation: Making It a Priority.....	82
Programs that Assist Neighborhood Preservation.....	84
A Preservation Project for Economically Depressed Neighborhoods.....	86
The Benefits of a Humanitarian Approach.....	89

Notes.....	91
Bibliography.....	92
Appendix I	
Questionnaire and Cover Letter.....	94
Appendix II	
Question Tabulations.....	100

LIST OF TABLES

Table I	- Participating Neighborhood Organizations.....	54
Table II	- Importance of Preservation Activities.....	62
Table III	- Neighborhood Organization Objectives.....	63
Table IV	- Requests for H.K.C.F. Services.....	66
Table V	- Problems of Neighborhood Rehabilitation.....	67
Table VI	- Familiarity with Organizations.....	71
Table VII	- H.K.C.F.'s Methods of Communication.....	72
Table VIII	- Media Coverage of Preservation.....	73

## Chapter 1

### THE ROLE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN PRESERVATION ORGANIZATIONS

Preservation of our historic buildings has received an increasing amount of attention in the past two decades. There is now more community interest, more media coverage, and more educational emphasis on appreciation of our architectural heritage than ever before in this country. Doubtless, these factors have prevented the destruction of many significant historic buildings, and these are some of the reasons that preservation has made the strides it has thus far. The danger of losing important, beautiful and useful buildings is not a thing of the past, however. If preservation is to be successful in the future, effective public communication by supportive organizations and agencies is important.

In Scott Cutlip and Allen Center's book, Effective Public Relations, the term public relations is defined as:

The management function which evaluates public attitudes, identifies the policies and procedures of an individual or an organization with the public interest, and plans and executes a program of action to earn public understanding and acceptance.

Knowledge of the functions of public relations is important if the purposes and goals of historic preservation groups in communities in the United States are to be met.

The successes historic preservation has had in the past have been due largely to public, rather than governmental, support. Favorable publicity that promoted preservation and called attention to a community's unique and beautiful historic

buildings has prevented the loss of a significant portion of our human-made cultural heritage in the last few decades. Although federal legislation has aided preservation efforts since 1966, specific identification and action to retain significant structures has been primarily left up to local groups. Preservation efforts that have been most successful are those where the importance of community involvement has been realized.

To communicate preservation ideas and information successfully, an organization must first understand prevalent public attitudes and needs. When these are known, then responsive programs can be developed. Creating a favorable image of preservation is more likely if the involved organization is able to communicate effectively its goals to the community. Although there is always a chance of failure in communications with the public, an active public-relations effort by an individual organization could alleviate some of the problems that might occur. A well established positive image of an organization is less likely to be damaged by a subsequent failure in public communication.

In this thesis, Historic Kansas City Foundation was used as a case study to explore communication effectiveness because of its already strong public relations base, a staff experienced in public communications, and a desire to improve methods of communication to its various publics. However, changes within the organization's programs seemed necessary to facilitate a better understanding of current preservation goals. Although

the organization has many publics, the concern in this study was with Kansas City's inner-city neighborhood residents. A representative voice of the city's various neighborhoods was expected in a response to a survey of neighborhood organization officers.

The underlying hypothesis of the study was that groups representing various interests should have their needs met in specific ways. A group representing a low-income residential neighborhood would most likely be concerned with different issues than one representing a middle to upper class neighborhood. Therefore, their needs and the issues concerning them should be addressed accordingly.

Kansas City's residential areas are well represented by neighborhood organizations that have been active in seeking improvements for residents. Although most were not formed for the purpose of preservation of buildings, most are in existence to retrieve, protect and insure a quality environment. These groups are a logical source of support for historic preservation; they are also a vital link in the communication chain from the general public to the decision makers that determine change in the community. Improvements in communicating with neighborhood groups could lead to a strengthened preservation base in the Kansas City community.

The first, and most important, communication step is listening. Therefore, the first phase of this study was to find out the concerns and needs of neighborhood residents.

Phase two was to develop a program that responds to their needs.

The following methodology was employed to determine the needs and issues in various neighborhoods so that a communications program could be developed to respond to them.

1. A four-page questionnaire was designed and sent to officers and executives of neighborhood organizations. The questions were to determine the respondents' familiarity with historic preservation and Historic Kansas City Foundation (H.K.C.F.) and its activities; and to identify the issues and needs of neighborhood residents. Selected participants were from the geographic area of metropolitan Kansas City, Missouri. The names of ninety organizations within this boundary were acquired from the Kansas City Department of Urban Development. The final mailing was sent to a sampling from that list.
2. Questionnaire data were analyzed to determine differences in the survey respondents' needs.
3. Principles and methods of public relations outlined in Effective Public Relations<sup>2</sup> were used as a guide in developing a program that responds to residents' needs and that also promotes understanding and acceptance of historic preservation and H.K.C.F.

Although this study was limited to Historic Kansas City Foundation's public relations with neighborhood groups, it is a step toward a more effective communication program with all of

the organization's publics. The purpose of the study is to: promote more understanding of the Foundation and its goals; and develop a program that supports the idea of a "preservation ethic," where conserving what is of value in the built environment addresses the problem of providing one of our basic human needs.

The scope of historic preservation is expanding. Every day, the historical significance of additional buildings is discovered, demand for usage changes, economic factors change, and various local and national concerns inhibit or expand public opinion of what is most important. All of these are reasons why public relations policies are crucial to historic preservation organizations if their goals are to be met.

Notes

1. There are various definitions of public relations; and choice depends on the philosophy and training of the practitioner. The definition used here has the elements of most, plus it contains words of action that are the essence of most public relations concepts.
2. Scott M. Cutlip and Allen H. Center, Effective Public Relations, (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1982).

## Chapter 2

### THE COMMUNICATION OF PRESERVATION IDEALS IN NEIGHBORHOODS

....conservation of the built environment should represent the beliefs of the inhabitants and promote an understanding of the past and the present.<sup>1</sup>

The National Trust for Historic Preservation Conference of 1979 focused on issues that were relevant to the national preservation movement for the 1980s. What the private sector could contribute to an enhanced quality of life through historic preservation was the theme of the conference.<sup>2</sup> Participants identified and clarified two important components: (1) improved communications to the public, and (2) neighborhood stability. The role of the private, non-profit organization in these two areas was discussed by several prominent historic preservation advocates. Local, private preservation groups responding to the needs of their respective communities and earning public acceptance of a preservation ethic were stated as essential functions.<sup>3</sup>

Communicating the message of preservation as a part of a quality-of-life movement was outlined in specific ways. Some of the topics discussed by the participants at the 1979 conference included increasing the use of the mass media; identifying audiences and developing programs that are in the public interest; promoting an awareness of and appreciation for architecture; and using special publications. G. Donald Adams, in his presentation, remarked:

Communication with those whose homes are affected by preservation begins with listening. This is particularly true of preservation projects in deteriorating neighborhoods with disadvantaged families. Attempts to build support for preservation through communication with residents of such areas must be well thought out and made direct and personal.

Preservationists can act as catalysts for neighborhood preservation so that residents of urban areas can benefit. Local preservation organizations can assist and work with neighborhood agencies by combining efforts to revitalize and enhance older residential areas.<sup>5</sup>

#### Preservation in Urban Neighborhoods

The back-to-the-city movement of the early 1970s facilitated the revitalization of many blighted neighborhoods in our cities. Older houses became especially attractive purchases for young adults who found the high construction cost of a new home in the suburbs unaffordable. "Sweat equity" made it possible for many of them to acquire adequate housing. Physical improvements to urban neighborhoods soon followed as new residents demanded better city services, where before residents of these areas (usually elderly and/or low income) lacked the resources to improve their situation. In some inner-city neighborhoods, however, incumbent residents were also able to make positive contributions to revitalization (New York and Philadelphia are examples).<sup>6</sup> The cultural diversity that has been maintained in many neighborhoods is important. Both the new, upward-bound and the old, established segments of the urban population have made significant

contributions to the "survival power" of our cities.<sup>7</sup> New owners with more adequate resources have restored a stronger economic base in the inner-cities, but working with and keeping the people already in the neighborhoods has been essential to the movement.<sup>8</sup>

With the idea that neighborhood identity is as important a reason for preserving as for historical and architectural values, one participant at the 1979 National Trust Conference stressed the need to stabilize neighborhoods by preventing displacement and keeping real estate prices from increasing so that people of different incomes could live in rehabilitated communities.<sup>9</sup> The Trust's involvement in neighborhood preservation had already taken form in 1978 when it initiated the Neighborhood Conservation Clearinghouse.<sup>10</sup> Its publication, Conserve Neighborhoods, had been widely distributed to give guidance to neighborhood organizations interested in preserving and maintaining their identity. Both the clearinghouse and the publication were responding to one of the fastest growing movements in the United States.<sup>11</sup>

Since the 1979 conference, preservation organizations from the national down to the local level have taken on new dimensions in their role as facilitators in achieving what is for the common good in urban neighborhoods. In summing up his presentation to the National Trust Conference, Roderick S. French stated:

We are entering a period in which we must (1) develop a clearer public perception of our goals, (2) avail ourselves of the opportunity to select issues to work

with, rather than only respond to, (3) assure that our preservation projects are designed for and work with people, and (4)<sup>12</sup> achieve a high standard of quality in our work.

#### Urban Neighborhoods Since 1960

Neighborhood organization grew out of an emphasis on community control that "emerged rather suddenly" in the mid-1960s. It was fostered by the Community Action Program, which was part of the 1964 Economic Opportunity Act.<sup>13</sup> Whether it was this program alone, or whether other factors contributed, it began a reversal in the mass exodus to the suburbs, a reversal that has continued in urban areas throughout the country. Community coalition groups of residents -- incumbent, new or in combination -- have had a significant effect on the upgrading of numerous urban areas. Neighborhood organization still is the strength of the continuing revitalization of our cities.

Initiative toward upward mobility has had a visible effect on the physical character of the city in the past. "Upgrading through movement" has predominated in American society since the mid-nineteenth century. The appeal of suburban living supported by a prospering national economy into the mid-twentieth century caused an upward mobility that has had a detrimental effect on the architectural fabric of most inner-cities. Residential buildings were the first "victims" of suburban growth in a pattern that turned single-family units into rental property (often converted to multi-family units) where overcrowding and neglect by absentee landlords caused

their spiraling deterioration. Again in the recent past, economic factors have had an impact on the urban environment. The high cost of land, building materials, labor and energy have created a demand for suitable, affordable housing and has contributed to the more recent trend of "upgrading in place."<sup>14</sup>

Federal legislation within the last decade also has enhanced the economic advantages of upgrading in place. The Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 was enacted to promote urban population redistribution, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development's 1977 Community Development Block Grant Program did much to aid the revitalization of urban neighborhoods.<sup>15</sup> Federal funding, along with concentrated citizen participation in development programs, has done much to improve the quality of urban life through physical upgrading, better municipal services and providing more jobs. Programs in many residential neighborhoods have aided in maintaining an economically balanced population that has prevented the displacement of low-income residents.<sup>16</sup>

Upgrading in place has met with difficulty in many urban areas, however. In neighborhoods that contain a large percentage of rentals (which is the case in a majority of cities) initiative and financing have been scarce. Buildings and tenants in these areas often were the victims of upgrading through movement. The process of deterioration in urban areas accelerated as the rush to the suburbs increased. Suburbanization and urban renewal (which supported new,

low-cost, subsidized, multi-unit buildings as the preferred solution to urban housing) forced older buildings into low-rental use. Incomes from these properties dropped and landlords became unable or unwilling to make basic improvements or provide maintenance.<sup>17</sup> The resulting "domino effect" of deterioration and demolition in urban neighborhoods for nearly three decades had a devastating impact on the nation's urban housing stock. Realizing that bulldozing neglected buildings was a waste of precious resources, preservation-minded citizens (and in rare instances, urban planners) began to advocate, more and more, upgrading instead of demolition.

Although federal programs were the impetus for much of the early destruction and later improvements in urban life, it was a reaction against too much government control (most often local) that caused the rise of neighborhood organizations. Groups were founded in many cities because of municipal planners wanting to destroy or alter some part of a neighborhood. Organization leaders became adept at creating strategies that focused on an issue, arousing citizens' interest and fostering neighborhood cohesion to fight against government control. They were responsible for resident unification that, a few years later, became effective in the fight against private interests of "redlining" and disinvestment (methods of controlling real estate by investment interests to create "desirable" and "undesirable" properties), which were for the economic profit of a few.<sup>18</sup>

Although historic preservation was not a primary

motivation, saving buildings that are a part of the neighborhood character has been the result of neighborhood organization activities. A survey of forty-four American cities gives evidence of the marked increase in urban residential renovation between 1970 and 1978, an indication of the amount of preservation activity that occurred in that relatively short period.<sup>19</sup> Aside from the benefit of reclaiming valuable housing, some sociologists, preservationists and planners believe that preservation of the built environment promotes better values than destroying it, and that it is also a means of achieving a stronger sense of place.<sup>20 21</sup>

The Image of Preservation and  
the Issue of Displacement

Preservation has created controversy because of the effects it has had on many incumbent urban residents. Groups organized to help low-income residents often view the revitalization process as a threat which causes rising rents, higher taxes, and, due to economic pressures, the eventual displacement of that segment of society.<sup>22</sup> As a result, upgrading has had some bearing on the image the public has of historic preservation and the organizations that support it. Displacement that sometimes is a result of restoration and rehabilitation has received negative response by the commercial media in the past few years. Although the cause of displacement is often due to several factors, the issue of gentrification (the restoration of deteriorated property

usually in a low-class area, by middle- and upper-class investors) by economically advantaged newcomers in neighborhoods that had become deteriorating slums, has received the most hostile media coverage. Whether gentrification is the cause of displacement or it is the result of other factors, it is an issue that has contributed to the elitist image of historic preservation.

Displacement due to gentrification (sometimes referred to as the "Georgetown syndrome") has been significant, according to some observers. Michael de Haven Newsome has stated in an issue of Law and Contemporary Problems that preservationists have a lack of concern for the issues of displacement.<sup>23</sup> Stating that Georgetown was an integrated community after the Civil War, he believes that blacks were an important part of the city's history and that their displacement beginning in the years following World War II disregarded preservation of the city's cultural history. He charged that historic preservation done in this manner is a "perversion and distortion" of history.<sup>24</sup> The question remains however, whether saving buildings (in this instance, sound housing stock) for those who can afford to restore and maintain them is worse (or better) than allowing them to deteriorate beyond repair. Often, by the time gentrification occurs, a neighborhood has developed conditions (such as abandonment and condemnation) that have already resulted in widespread displacement.<sup>25</sup>

#### Causes of Displacement

It is important to recognize displacement when it begins to

occur. An organization supporting preservation activities in a neighborhood should be aware of it, its cause, and the issues involved. Being aware of causes should not be used to "point a blaming finger" at other agencies or problems; rather it should be used as information so that the preservationists can be more responsive to the issues that displacement creates.

Deterioration and demolition claimed many historic buildings in urban neighborhoods in the decades of inner-city decline. The pattern of population movement that drained cities of a sound economic base was reflected in neglected urban neighborhoods. Movement to the suburbs and urban renewal both were forces that brought physical change to our cities. The desire for newer housing facilitated the process of older housing stock being turned into low-profit property, which caused residential buildings to suffer neglect and face condemnation in most major metropolitan areas. The process was the primary cause of displacement during the decades of the 50s and 60s. Also responsible, yet far beyond the control of low-income tenants, profiteering and government control left victim a large percentage of urban neighborhoods. Until the back-to-the-city movement began in the early 1970s, the decline caused untold losses in valuable housing stock. Drastic physical changes were inevitable when the economic base of neighborhoods had eroded away.

George and Eunice Grier defined three types of displacement in Urban Displacement: A Reconnaissance:

1. Disinvestment displacement - when property is not

- maintained and the ultimate deterioration leads to abandonment or condemnation.
2. Reinvestment displacement - when capital is put into previously undesirable property causing value to rise, often making it unaffordable for incumbent residents to remain (the process of gentrification).
  3. Displacement due to enhanced competition - when buyers are able to acquire property for their residential use that the former owner cannot afford because of higher taxes or maintenance costs. This often occurs to elderly residents who are on a fixed income and are not able to meet expenses of owning a home.

According to the Grier study, most displacement has been the result of disinvestment; however, in recent years, it seems apparent the other two types are having an increased effect.<sup>26</sup> Displacement caused by enhanced competition may be the type that is increasing most rapidly. Unlike reinvestment-caused displacement, these new owners often are not much more affluent than the displaced residents.<sup>27</sup> In most instances, they are simply buying what meets their needs at a price they can afford.<sup>28</sup>

Urban neighborhoods that are being partially re-populated by new, middle-income residents and are also able to maintain a balance of incumbent residents have the potential of a quality urban environment where cultural history is preserved. Preservation programs aimed at improving amenities in diversely populated neighborhoods would be a step toward a greatly

enhanced environment. If the preservation movement is to successfully serve the urban dweller, "social justice and cultural diversity must both be observed." Private preservation organizations should energetically pursue a strong base of support from city residents.<sup>29</sup>

#### Stages of Public Opinion and Historic Preservation

Gaining support for an idea that involves public opinion almost always follows a predictable pattern. It generally has three stages; each requires an action (or actions) for that specific stage. Most historic preservation issues are in the third stage of public opinion. The social process that shapes how people perceive situations that affect them is:

1. Discontent with something for which the people involved believe to have a remedy through group action -- both the urban preservation and neighborhood organizations movements were in this stage in the 1960s.
2. Finding a general expression, when the common need is realized -- this phase occurred in the early 1970s.
3. Discussion of controversial issues, forming leadership, proposing solutions, and obtaining publicity through the news media -- this is the phase that began, for the most part, in the mid-1970s and is continuing in this decade.

Since issues that evolve in a societal change are likely to be controversial, the third stage of public opinion almost always involves competition. Historic preservation issues (especially where economic factors are a concern) have brought about competition. In the past and today, the controversy due to an

investor's desire for economic gain against the public interest of what is for the good of all was and is common. Recognizing that competition is part of this process is a factor that preservation groups must deal with. There is always some loss when competition occurs since compromises must be made. It is important for both parties to have an understanding of the opposition. Therefore, the present issues of urban neighborhood preservation need to be carefully researched and analyzed and then the findings acted upon. Compromises will likely have to be made, but they could be fewer if the opposing sides understand each other's view and goals. Preservation organizations and urban residents can both achieve their goals and have their needs met in the process. The recognition of competition as part of the process of public opinion needs to be considered and the issues that arise from competition need to be heard. Listening to the opinion of those whose lives are affected by urban preservation is the most democratic process that will help urban resident groups "adapt themselves to their environments and prosper."<sup>30</sup> A humanistic approach that aims at clarifying the common good is what preservationists are most interested in today.<sup>31</sup>

#### Private and Public Aid to Preservation Programs

Neighborhood rehabilitation programs across the country have been dependent on the communication of values and ideas to gain support since the back-to-the-city/neighborhood conservation movement began in the mid-1960s. The success of such programs was obvious at a 1975 meeting held in New York

and sponsored in part by the Brownstone Revival Committee. Preservationists, mostly non-professionals representing various urban groups, met to share their rehabilitation experiences. In his introductory remarks, James Marston Fitch observed:

Most of the fundamental advances that have been made [in urban preservation] have been made by ignorant laymen.<sup>32</sup>

Most of the urban residential revitalization presented at the Brownstone Conference had been done by people who were "reclaiming" areas of their cities without any government backing.<sup>33</sup>

One of the successes was 94th Street in New York City, which was the scene of the riots in the summer of 1962. Ten years later, it became "one of the most beautiful blocks in the city" due to the efforts of one couple who had bought a home in that area the winter before the riots. The couple started their project by buying flower boxes and enlisting young people in the neighborhood to distribute them to residents.<sup>34</sup>

Similar successes were repeated in other urban areas across the country. Many public communication programs were used to call attention to, enlist participation in, and gain support for neighborhood improvements in the early days of the revival. House tours by members of one New York neighborhood group helped sell that community. Renovated houses in the neighborhood were opened to call attention to the possibilities of revitalization and the group handed out a list of houses for sale in the neighborhood to people who came to tour.<sup>35</sup> In New York's Park Slope district, bankers were invited to events

where organization members worked to convince them that housing loans in the area were a good investment.<sup>36</sup> The Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation went door-to-door selling preservation on the South Side to help poor black tenants acquire government funds to become home owners.<sup>37</sup> Whether spearheaded by an individual, or the project of a foundation, communicating ideas of revitalization began to reverse the process of decay in many urban neighborhoods.

Many non-profit preservation organizations were formed during the early 1960s when urban renewal (which meant demolition) was, in most public agencies' eyes, the answer to city revitalization. The conflict between the opposing viewpoints began many of the negative image problems that preservation organizations have today. Shortly after its founding in 1964, Greater Portland Landmarks was accused of being opposed to the economic well-being of the city. Early on, the organization was challenged to combat this image. To do this, their programs and policies were aimed at eliminating the "do-gooder" image, developing credibility for the organization, showing that it could be a "business-like and serious force in the community," involving the public, and educating city officials.<sup>38</sup> Preservation organizations in other cities were also faced with conflicting issues with municipal governments.

By the early 1970s, however, federal and local government programs began aiding revitalization. The 312 Program, which was established with the 1974 Housing and Community Development

Act, provided \$11 billion for low interest loans (3% rate) for neighborhood improvements.<sup>39</sup> Section 23 leasing aided in both rehabilitating houses and providing housing for low-income residents. The program allowed for an organization to buy property, lease it to the city on a five-year contract (before restoration), then use the contract as collateral for a mortgage to do the restoration. The city in turn would sublet to low-income families at reduced rents which would also be subsidized.<sup>40</sup>

The National Trust for Historic Preservation (N.T.H.P.) also encouraged neighborhood rehabilitation during this time with financial assistance. Matching grant funding in Louisville, Kentucky was made available to help preserve the Old Louisville District. N.T.H.P. consultant grants were given to neighborhoods in Dallas, Texas and Ann Arbor, Michigan. Aid to neighborhood preservation was especially effective in Dallas' Swiss Avenue District. After receiving National Register Historic District designation in 1973, this area was changed from a slum into a completely restored community within three years.<sup>41</sup> Neighborhoods in many cities benefited from financial aid made available to them in the 1970s. It is a factor that made urban housing renovation "the most rapidly growing area of preservation."<sup>42</sup>

#### Preserving the Urban Housing Stock

Although preservation of buildings was not the main objective in the formation of many inner-city neighborhood organizations, the fact that they were, in most cases, formed

for neighborhood improvement makes these groups good audiences for preservation values and goals. Although these organizations have been in existence for over a decade, many urban residents are not aware that preservation could be a means for them to achieve amenities for themselves. Receiving assistance through programs of preservation may not have occurred to many, since often neighborhood residents do not consider their buildings to be historic or to have any cultural value. Preservation organizations are in a position to educate and assist urban dwellers to realize and enhance their neighborhood's historic and cultural values. The primary reason, however, for preservationists to become more involved is that older urban neighborhoods are a rich source of housing that should not be allowed to deteriorate whether the buildings are fifty or one-hundred and fifty years old.

The magnitude of dealing with urban neighborhood housing issues is evidenced in data gathered in a 1983 National Trust for Historic Preservation study. In the report, historic and older residential buildings were found to be a significant portion of America's housing stock. Researchers found that:

1. 26.7% of residential buildings are more than 50 years old.
2. 31% of the nation's housing units are in structures built before 1940. These older residential buildings:
  - (a) have about the same proportion of single-family detached houses as newer housing units (64% versus 65%);
  - (b) have more 2- to 4-unit dwellings than new units (21%

versus 12%); (c) have fewer buildings with more than five units than new ones (9% versus 13%); (d) are more likely than newer housing to be renter-occupied (40% versus 32%) or vacant (9% versus 7%); and (e) are less likely to be owner-occupied than newer housing (51% versus 61%).

The statistics in the study also included the following:

1. Buildings built between 1930 and 1945 may soon become our most endangered buildings.
2. 26% of the nation's owner-occupied housing stock was built before 1940.
3. 38% of the nation's renter-occupied housing stock was built before 1940.
4. 40% of all central-city households live in old housing, compared to 26% of all suburban households and 34% of all rural households.
5. Central cities have a disproportionate share of older housing, with 40% of all units but only 29% of all households. Older and historic buildings often house low- and moderate-income households, although residents of old houses show a wider range of incomes than residents of new houses.
6. During the six years that tax incentives for preservation have been available, more than 25,000 housing units have been designated for low- and moderate-income households. This amounts to more than half of all housing units created by conversion using

the tax incentives.

7. The National Park Service estimates that more than 35,500 housing units have been created in projects taking advantage of the Investment Tax Credit for certified historic rehabilitation.
8. Between 1973 and 1980 about 5% of the nation's total housing stock was lost -- approximately 4 million units.
9. Between 1973 and 1980, about 4.7 million new housing units were created through conversion of non-residential buildings to residential use, the division of single-unit residences, and the restoration of abandoned buildings.

These recent statistics of the nature of our country's housing identify that inner-city older residences are numerous and are likely to be rented; they house a large majority of the cities' population; and they are likely to house low- or moderate-income residents. These data are helpful in determining programs for urban neighborhood preservation; however, since the data in the survey were gathered on a national scale, individual analyses of neighborhoods need to be made to determine how each is (or has been) affected by the local housing market. It is one of the considerations that has to be made if the residents' needs are to be met through any program or policy designed to serve the community interest.<sup>43</sup>

#### Defining Residents' Needs and Perceptions

The needs of urban neighborhood residents cannot be

determined if they are not clearly defined. Academic research and visual analysis can be used to define needs; however, the most important factor is learning what the residents of older neighborhoods want for themselves, whether preservation of buildings is important to them or not. What they perceive as the aesthetic, ethnic and social qualities of their environment may be as important (if not more important) a reason to preserve as preserving the historic and architectural qualities.<sup>44</sup> Individual differences between neighborhoods should be considered in approaching the relevant issues. This does not necessarily mean that block by block analyses need to be made. Certain shared characteristics in different neighborhoods could indicate similar needs (e.g. a neighborhood that has 50% rental/50% owner-occupied housing in the \$40,000 to \$50,000 range could have comparable concerns to other neighborhoods in this category). A sampling of neighborhood responses would verify this hypothesis; however using knowledge gained from one analysis must be carefully used when applying it elsewhere. The process of gathering information about people's perceptions and needs is probably the most important public relations function of a preservation organization working with neighborhood residents. It is also the most difficult and most time-consuming process of public relations. Effective preservation programs and policies directed at neighborhood revitalization should start with it, however.

There has been relatively little emphasis on methods that preservation organizations can use to determine the public's

perception of historic preservation or the issues that concern them. Gathering this information is important to these organizations in order to develop policies and programs that will benefit their publics, whether urban neighborhood residents or others.

Citizen opinion and participation have been supported by some municipal governments since the early 1970s.<sup>45</sup> New York City planner, Jonathan Barnett, wrote in Urban Design as Public Policy the following:

....[a] community will participate most effectively in the decision-making process when government is administered on a neighborhood basis, and that the planning process<sup>46</sup> begins by agreeing on what existing conditions are.

Letting people within a community decide on the significance of their buildings, and where demolition and rebuilding should occur, enforces the "sense of community" and belonging that is a vital ingredient in neighborhood preservation. For their decisions to be more responsive to historic preservation ideals, strong leadership and effective education programs need to be made available to them. Providing accurate information and assistance would help insure that the common good of the people in the community is served.

Initiative to upgrade is evident where neighborhood organizations have been formed; however, knowledge of preservation methods may often be scarce. The option to upgrade through historic preservation methods could possibly facilitate the urban preservation movement. What urban residents need in respect to preservation information must be

learned so that pertinent responses by preservation organizations can be made.

A recent study of public perception and participation can be specifically related to an urban neighborhood survey of perceptions, needs and issues -- the Indiana Historic Preservation Survey of 1983. The research team conducted this study in two segments. The subjects in the first control group were members of local, state or national preservation organizations. The subjects in the second control group were randomly selected from the general public; however, there was one criterion used for the general public survey. In it, selected participants were from an income group of above \$25,000 per year since 80% of the membership survey group indicated to be in this category.<sup>47</sup> Responding to whether they favored preserving historic buildings, 54% of the general public said they were "very much in favor;" 46% were "somewhat in favor." In both groups, the most favored reason for preserving historic buildings was the importance of preserving the heritage for future generations. An interesting answer comparison to the question, "Why should historic structures be preserved?" was that more of the general public ranked higher preserving because demolition is a waste of resources than did the membership segment. Of the following priorities listed: (1) revitalizing downtown; (2) revitalizing neighborhoods; and (3) saving historic structures from demolition; "downtown revitalization" was favored as most important and "saving historic buildings from demolition" least important in both

survey groups. The response to favored priorities could be significant in developing historic preservation programs since much of a preservation organization's efforts go into saving what is considered to have historic landmark status; it is the activity that is most often associated with such organizations.

The survey also revealed that of the most important preservation programs or services desired, the general public ranked "providing low interest loans" first while the members of preservation organizations ranked "public education" highest. Other choices were: "professional help or technical information;" and, "providing information on tax incentives."

Two conclusions can be drawn from the Indiana survey: (1) people who are not members of preservation organizations seem to have more of a concern for economic aspects of preservation (they rated saving buildings because their demolition was a waste of resources and they were most interested in the provision of low interest loans) than the people who held memberships, and (2) saving historic buildings from demolition (the primary activity of historic preservation groups in the past) was the least important priority in both survey groups. More favored priorities were the revitalizations of residential and downtown areas.

Another study, which is the subject of the publication Urban Displacement: A Reconnaissance, specifies the causes of displacement in urban neighborhoods. The issues raised in this document concerning the preservation movement are ones that affect the public image of organizations promoting

preservation. The authors state that "reinvestment related displacement" (gentrification) is an important issue to address because its high visibility makes it a target for emotions triggered by the larger problem (displacement).<sup>48</sup>

Determining whether displacement is occurring in a particular neighborhood may be useful information; however, it is often hard to detect even though it is occurring.<sup>49</sup> If it is found to be an issue in an area, determining the cause and taking appropriate action for that area should be promoted by preservation interest groups.

If an organization can discover the perceptions the public has of it, and if it can determine what the public's needs are, it can be the first step in implementing an effective communication program that helps promote the organization's goals.

Notes

1. Katherine A. Oliver, "Places, Conservation and the Care of Streets in Hartlepool," in Valued Environments, eds. John R. Gold and Jacqueline Burges (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1982), p. 158.
2. Preservation: Toward an Ethic in the 1980s (Washington: Preservation Press, 1980), p. 8.
3. Ibid., p. 210.
4. Ibid., p. 124.
5. Ibid., p. 16.
6. Instances of such revitalization were noted and discussed at the Brownstone Revival Conference held in New York, in 1975.
7. From an address by Roderick S. French at the National Trust Conference of 1979.
8. Brownstone Revival Committee of New York, Inc., Back to the City (New York: Brownstone Revival Committee of New York, Inc., 1975), p. 46.
9. Preservation: Toward an Ethic in the 1980s, p. 193.
10. Ibid., p. 117.
11. Ibid., p. 117.
12. Ibid., p. 193.
13. Howard H. Hallman, Neighborhood Control of Public Programs, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), p. 3.
14. Anthony Downs, "Key Relations Between Urban Development and Neighborhood Change," in Journal of the American Planning Association 45 (Oct. 1979): 466.
15. John L. Goodman, Jr., "Reasons for Moves Out of and Into Large Cities," Journal of the American Planning Association 45 (Oct., 1974): 413.
16. Downs, "Key Relations," p. 467.
17. Ibid., p. 464
18. John M. Goering, "The National Neighborhood Movement: A Preliminary Analysis and Critique," Journal of the American Planning Association, 45 (Oct., 1979) 507.

19. Howard J. Sumka, "Neighborhood Revitalization and Displacement," Journal of the American Planning Association 45 (Oct., 1979) 482.
20. Goering, "National Neighborhood Movement," p. 513.
21. Robin E. Datel and Dennis J. Dingemans, "Environmental Perception, Historic Preservation, and Sense of Place," in Environmental Perception and Behavior, eds., Thomas Saarinen, David Seamon and James Sell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 124.
22. Preservation: Toward an Ethic in the 1980s. p. 205.
23. Michael de Haven Newsom, "Blacks and Historic Preservation," in Law and Contemporary Problems 36 (Durham, N.C.: Duke University School of Law, 1971), 424.
24. Ibid., p. 424.
25. George and Eunice Grier, Urban Displacement: A Reconnaissance (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, 1978), p. iii.
26. Ibid., p. 20.
27. Ibid., p. 20.
28. In the Grier study, it was stated that the median value of an owner-occupied urban house was \$26,900 compared to a suburban house of \$35,300.
29. Malcolm Baldwin, "Historic Preservation in the Context of Environmental Law: Mutual Interest in Amenity," in Law and Contemporary Problems 36 (Durham, N.C.: Duke University School of Law, 1971) 436.
30. Ibid., p. xxxiii.
31. Preservation: Toward an Ethic for the 1980s, p. 187.
32. Back to the City, p. 6.
33. Ibid., p. 15.
34. Ibid., p. 13.
35. Ibid., p. 11.
36. Ibid., p. 12.

37. "Pittsburg: Virtuoso Preservationists" in Architectural Record (November, 1983) p. 97.
38. Back to the City, p. 37.
39. Ibid., p. 73.
40. Ibid., p. 43.
41. Ibid., p. 31-32.
42. Ibid., p. 33.
43. Grier, Urban Displacement, p. 6.
44. Robert E. Stipe, "The Next Ten Years: Directions and Impacts of the National Register on Planning and the Built Environment," Supplement 11593 of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1977. p. 4.
45. It was "required" even in the urban renewal legislation of the sixties; however, citizen opinion and input often were minimal.
46. Ibid., p. 104.
47. Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, Indiana Historic Preservation Survey - 1983, pp. 1-2.
48. Grier, Urban Displacement, p. iii.
49. Ibid., p. 3.

### Chapter 3

#### PUBLIC RELATIONS AND THE PUBLIC IMAGE OF PRESERVATION

A function of public relations is the implementation of methods of communication between an organization and its public to give identity to and information about the organization. It is to influence the public's image and to help in their understanding and accepting its goals. The need to communicate with its public varies according to the function of an organization; however, effective communication is governed by basic principles that remain the same whether the organization is a company selling a product or a non-profit agency promoting an idea. The most important principle is that the policies and programs of an organization should be in the public interest. The perception the public has of an organization is dependent on this principle. Open, honest, two-way communication is the most effective way to project a positive image. It indicates the organization's concern for the issues, needs and interests of its publics. Listening is crucial in the communication process. Ignorance of public needs and the issues that are important can lead to an organization's ineffectiveness. Responsive programs and policies are nearly impossible when this step is not recognized.

Within the three basic elements of communication -- the sender, the message, and the receiver -- there must be a two-way flow. Developing and maintaining this flow requires effort in a society that is constantly changing. Solutions

cannot be very effective if the problem is not clearly defined. Effective response is difficult at best without listening to determine what is needed. Misunderstanding between agencies and the public often results when there is little or no communication between them. In Valued Environments, David Uzzell states:

...there are fundamental differences in the way the public and the decision makers see the environment and define not the solutions, but the problems.

The focus of preservation efforts has expanded in the last two decades. Public support is perhaps at a more critical stage than ever before if historically significant buildings and districts are to be saved. Whether the public relations methods used by an organization meet the needs of society will determine how preservation is managed today and how it will move into the future.

#### The Activities of Public Communication

All types of public relations activities can be effectively used to promote the ethic that is important to the preservation movement. Opinion research, press-agentry, product promotion, publicity, lobbying, public affairs, fund raising and membership drives, and special event management can all contribute to its success.<sup>1</sup> Responsible use of all these promotional tools implies that these activities are in the public interest.

Opinion research is the first, and ideally the most important, function in an effective public relations program. When the preservation movement was in its infancy, the need for

it was not apparent. Most early efforts were directed toward saving historically important buildings of national and patriotic significance. The need to preserve them was based on the importance of their associations with the past, whether with a person or an event. In the last few decades, preservation has focused on economic, social and ethical factors. Saving old buildings for the effect they have on the well-being of society has received more emphasis. This factor is why opinion research is so important. Although finding a public consensus is time consuming and requires both training and skill, it is fundamental to effective communication in any organization involved with social or environmental issues.

Press agentry, although it has negative connotations, can be a useful tool. It is primarily used to call attention to something or someone. In preservation, calling attention to historic and architecturally important buildings is an educational process. A preservation organization publicizing its good works helps create a positive image, which is necessary to gain needed public support.

Product promotion is normally thought of in terms of marketing a product. However, promoting ideas and knowledge of historic preservation is essential to the survival of the movement. Those ideas that are relevant to saving buildings need to be promoted to achieve understanding of why it is important to preserve them. Tax incentives, adaptive use, a quality environment, are objectives and means to achieve goals that preservationists are "selling" to the public.

Publicity is an activity that makes use of and is directed specifically at the media. Its effectiveness is dependent on an organization's activities being acceptable to the owners and staffs of newspapers, radio and television stations. A medium's personnel has an influence on the general population which has a direct effect on both opinion and image. Preservation cannot survive without media support. Therefore, an organization's learning to communicate with them is essential. First, newsworthy events must be produced. The organization staff must learn and use the correct news contact process which can mean whether an event is publicized. Writing timely news releases that follow the accepted format, not "hassling" for coverage, and using common courtesy will get the best results with the news media.

Lobbying has been an essential activity that has influenced the laws that protect historic property. The National Trust for Historic Preservation employs lobbyists to promote legislation favorable to its concerns on the national level. Community relations are an indirect means of lobbying on the local level, which is communicating with the decision makers that control local (city, and at times, extending to state level) planning and legislation. The tasks of lobbying include (1) getting pertinent information from officials and records, (2) presenting persuasive information to officials, (3) promoting favorable legislation, and (4) obtaining government cooperation and sponsorship. Persons skilled in communication are necessary at all levels.

Of the eight public relations activities listed on page 34, historic preservation organizations are most involved in public affairs because of their concern for the environmental quality of communities. Because of a desire to improve their image, corporate interest in public affairs programs has also increased within the last few years. Housing programs have been financed and supported by some companies as a way to help people in the communities where they are located. At the same time, this interest in public affairs has been an important factor in building their business image. Supporting and financing community activities have become a beneficial investment for them. Corporate participation and donations should be solicited by preservation organizations as a source of support for their activities that promote housing rehabilitation. Rehabilitating useful older buildings for the aesthetic and economic good of the entire community should be an important endeavor of corporations in a community. In 1983, only 4% of the donated corporate dollar was for historic and cultural preservation.<sup>2</sup> If this were increased, benefits to more people in the community could be realized.

Fund raising and membership drives are the life blood of preservation organizations; they are both dependent on effective communication. The amount of participation in and funding for all non-profit groups depends on how their programs and goals are portrayed. Direct mailings and specialized media (e.g. brochures) are tools of this activity. Solicitation for money and membership requires sensitivity to the organization's

constituency, persuasive skills and an "abiding faith in the worth of the undertaking."<sup>3</sup>

Special event management ties with fund raising in most non-profit organizations. Setting goals, financial planning, committee management, developing a time schedule, recruiting volunteers, carrying out the event, post-event duties and evaluation are necessary steps for a successful special event.<sup>4</sup> Special events have been significant money makers for preservation projects in many communities.<sup>5</sup>

There is a difference between corporate and non-profit organizations in their emphasis on types of communication. Non-profit groups use those tools that are most likely to meet their objectives, which are: (1) to raise money, (2) to broaden and maintain a base of volunteer participation, (3) to win public acceptance of new ideas and concepts, (4) to effectively market programs and services, and (5) to develop channels of communication with the segment of the public termed disadvantaged, who are often cut off from the mainstream of society.<sup>6</sup> Although fund raising is first on the list, the other four objectives involve gaining understanding and citizen participation. This is why effective communication with all sectors of society is essential to the existence of non-profit agencies.<sup>7</sup>

#### The Image of Historic Preservation

The image that is projected by public relations activities determines not just the perception of the organization, but also the public's perceived value of what the organization

promotes. People who support the preservation movement, quite naturally, have a positive, if not always a total or accurate image of it. It is assumed that they have an understanding and appreciation of historic buildings and their significance. On the other hand, the majority of the public may be virtually oblivious of those elements in the built environment that affect their lives.

Learning to appreciate one's architectural heritage and being economically advantaged enough to restore and maintain the historic material culture has been, until the last few years, a basically elitist activity. It has served the movement well. Thus, it should not be viewed as completely detrimental, but rather why many of our historically important buildings exist today. Current issues have changed the focus of historic preservation, however. Concerns have expanded and people of all socio-economic groups are involved with issues of preservation that have implications on their lives. All historic preservation groups must accommodate and consider these groups. Their helping to meet the needs of and provide for the amenities of a quality environment for all in the community will enhance, if indeed not mean survival of, our urban neighborhoods.

Ideally, information and services should be promoted and provided to the entire community. It is not an impossible goal for preservationists. Facing current public issues and changing the elitist image is controversial, but it should not be threatening to any segment of society. Perhaps the

realization of the benefits of an encompassing program is all that is needed to change attitudes and the negative elitist image.

#### The Image and Neighborhood Preservation

The attention given to neighborhood revitalization beginning in the late 1960s has brought into focus the basic human need for a "sense of community."<sup>8</sup> Historic preservation has been viewed as a means of achieving a stronger sense of place that is symbolized by the identity with community.<sup>9</sup> Some of the amenity factors preservation in urban residential neighborhoods provides are the historical associations of its buildings, quality craftsmanship, uniqueness of design and cultural identity.

Historical correctness has not usually been a consideration in many past efforts in urban preservation. Although the intent behind much of restoration has been architectural accuracy, in many instances the cultural aspect of the place has been ignored. Some revitalization programs have forced low-income families that have contributed to their communities' heritage out of their homes to face the hardship of finding another in an increasingly dwindling housing market. At the same time, revitalization increased available housing to those who already had more options. The impact of displacement and gentrification has been an issue of great debate in the past two decades. It is not surprising that the image of historic preservation has been affected. Previously referred to as the "Georgetown syndrome," the issues involved in this type of

urban restoration has raised questions as to whether the motives of preservation were actually historic to much of the public, when a community's cultural integrity was destroyed in order to accommodate the economic gain of a few.<sup>10</sup> By the 1970s, however, new trends in neighborhood rehabilitation programs were occurring in many cities. Preservation on the basis of importance to the residents increased. Historic preservation organizations in many cities have been slow in responding to the change to the new "preservation ethic." This may explain why the image of elitism still must be combatted.<sup>11</sup> The National Trust for Historic Preservation took up the standard for the future of preservation at the 1979 Williamsburg Conference by stating that a quality environment should be available to all. As a humanistic movement, preservation should promote diversity and "cultural pluralism" to insure that the movement is a democratic one.<sup>12</sup>

The survival of our cities is dependent upon restoration of its residential segments. Residential decay and blight spill over into the commercial and business districts making them unpleasant and threatening places for people to work, shop and find recreation. Urban neighborhoods need middle and upper-income residents where the housing suits their life style. They bring with them the financial resources needed to restore long neglected areas. But, urban neighborhoods need to maintain a balance of lower-income residents. Not only can and should their basic needs be met there, they are necessary to the community. Their supportive economic contribution to the

work force is vital to the survival of those activities that are in the core of our cities.

We have discovered that total demolition and rebuilding is not a satisfying solution to the problem of making cities livable for any of its inhabitants. Saving, restoring and maintaining what we have, in many instances, seems to be the most cost-effective solution and the one that provides people of all socio-economic levels with the amenities they need.

Robert Stipe sums up this concept:

Our problem now is to acknowledge that historic conservation is but one aspect of the much larger problem, basically an environmental one, of enhancing -- or perhaps developing for the first time -- the quality of life for people. Especially is this so for those people who in increasing numbers struggle daily to justify an increasingly dismal existence in a rapidly deteriorating urban environment .... We have got to learn to look beyond our traditional preoccupation with architecture and history, to break out of our traditionally elitist intellectual and aesthetic mold, and turn our preservation energies to a broader and more constructive social purpose as well. We have got to look beyond the problem of architectural artifacts, and think about how to conserve urban neighborhoods for human purposes. If we can achieve this, to some extent, at least, the architecture and the history will fall into place.

Our architectural heritage is important to all of society. If preservationists can effectively communicate this to the public, their contribution toward a quality environment could be significant.

Notes

1. Cutlip, pp. 10-12.
2. Kansas City Star, 24 November 1983.
3. Cutlip, Effective Public Relations, p. 11.
4. National Trust for Historic Preservation, "Community Events," in Conserve Neighborhoods, July-Aug. 1980.
5. The above are the important activities of public relations as they are defined by Scott Cutlip and Allen Center in Effective Public Relations.
6. Cutlip, Effective Public Relations, p. 467.
7. Ibid., p. 474.
8. Malcolm F. Baldwin, "Historic Preservation in the Context of Environmental Law: Mutual Interest in Amenity," in Law and Contemporary Problems 36 (Durham, N.C.: Duke University School of Law, 1971) 436.
9. Datel, "Environmental Perception," p. 130.
10. Georgetown syndrome is somewhat a misnomer since much of the restoration of that city involved housing that was originally occupied by people of greater wealth before it became a slum. Most of Georgetown's preservation is historically appropriate.
11. Baldwin, "Mutual Interest in Amenity," p. 435.
12. Preservation: Toward an Ethic in the 1980s, p. 188, (from a paper by Roderick S. French.)
13. Address by Robert Stipe, 1971 Conference on Preservation Law.

## Chapter 4

### HISTORIC KANSAS CITY FOUNDATION'S PUBLIC RELATION ACTIVITIES

Establishing more effective communication with Kansas City inner-city residents is the first step in developing a public relations program that emphasizes preservation of the place, where the needs and desires of its inhabitants are met, as well as its historic buildings. As a concerned preservation organization, Historic Kansas City Foundation (H.K.C.F.) has the resources and interests to develop such a program in the city's neighborhoods.

The idea of this non-profit foundation was formed by three supporters of historic preservation. The organization was chartered by the State of Missouri in 1974 and was granted federal tax exempt status the same year. The Foundation was patterned after the already successful Historic Savannah Foundation, with a board of directors set up to govern its activities. These directors, plus numerous volunteers, donate their time and talents to the organization.

The board employed its first full-time executive director in 1976. In 1977, three full-time positions were added -- a director of history, an administrative assistant and a secretary-bookkeeper. A preservation architect position was added to the staff the following year.

H.K.C.F. was founded to preserve Kansas City's architectural heritage. Its purpose also was to act as a

the past, the Board of Directors has determined the organization's policies; and the staff has developed programs to implement them. The activities of the organization have been directed at the preservation of historic buildings and the education of the public toward that goal. Means of communication with the public have included: (1) presentations by the staff to various groups, (2) contacts with the news media, (3) promotion of special events, and (4) distribution of brochures and educational materials. The organization has a revolving fund which allows the purchase, restoration and resale of historic properties. It gives free counsel to owners of historic buildings in matters concerning finance, restoration and preservation. The Foundation also participates in historic building surveys.

Historic Kansas City Foundation has had an active public communication program since its formation in 1974. Like most preservation organizations founded in the 1970s, the public relations methods used were responding to the objectives of raising money and generating participation. These objectives are still major concerns, as well as are marketing their programs and services and working to gain more public acceptance of preservation concepts and goals. The socio-economic group the organization has directed its programs toward probably has contributed to the elitist image which participants in the 1979 National Trust for Historic Preservation Conference were concerned. If that image exists and it interferes with H.K.C.F.'s gaining acceptance in the

community, efforts should be made to change this. The Foundation should include in its activities a program directed toward that group of society that previously has been unable to realize as much benefit from historic preservation. Since a large percentage of Kansas City inner-city neighborhoods are low-income, more effort should be made to consider these residents in the Foundation's neighborhood preservation activities. Successful communication is difficult, especially with those who do not have many of the societal benefits that others have.

Communication with all residents, whether of a high or low socio-economic group, should begin by finding out what are their concerns and needs. Establishment of a conducive social climate that encourages neighborhood groups to communicate, and adequate resources on the part of preservation organizations to respond, are two criteria that could insure a successful program. Historic Kansas City Foundation can better serve neighborhood residents when important issues and needs are known.

#### Existing Public Relations Programs

Historic Kansas City Foundation has made effective use of public communication tools in the past. Staff positions have been filled with professionals with experience and competence in methods of public contact.

The staff is headed by an executive director whose responsibilities are to (1) act as official spokesman for the organization, (2) project a positive image, (3) work as liaison

between the staff and board, (4) act as the organization contact with public officials, and (5) coordinate activities with other preservation agencies.

An administrative assistant (1) coordinates volunteer activities, (2) acts as liaison to neighborhood groups, and (3) gives presentations to educators and students.

A director of communication and education (which is a position that replaced the director of history) has the responsibilities of (1) producing all written and audio-visual materials, including the bi-monthly newsletter, and (2) giving presentations to various groups.

A preservation architect (1) gives technical assistance on preservation projects and to those seeking aid on an individual basis, (2) acts as liaison to architects and technical associates, (3) presents programs of preservation projects to various groups, and (4) oversees the Foundation's real estate activities.

Public relations programs that are being implemented by the staff have been effective in meeting organizational objectives; however, changes in existing programs could enhance ongoing activities. The Foundation has had a strong relationship with the news media, a public relations tool it has used since its beginning in 1974. News releases of upcoming and ongoing activities are sent to radio, television and newspaper editors and news directors so that information is disseminated to the general public. Kansas City's news magazines are informed of preservation concerns. They receive news releases and photos.

Newspaper department editors are often contacted about those activities that have to do with real estate, social events, and items that are appropriate for special columns. The staff also promotes the organization's activities with guest appearances on radio and television talk shows.

The Foundation has produced three brochures about Kansas City's architecture: "West Side Neighborhood," "Santa Fe Neighborhood," and a pamphlet that gives information about H.K.C.F. and its activities. These are intended for general audiences, homeowners and realtors. Distribution is through requests to the Foundation and in booths at special community events, such as neighborhood home fairs.

H.K.C.F. uses an educational aid, "The Possum Trotter," to bring the ideas of preservation of architecture to elementary school children. A series of three brochures is made available to the public schools where teachers can use it on a voluntary basis.

The Historic Kansas City Foundation Gazette is a bi-monthly news bulletin that is mailed to its 1,100 members and to other major preservation organizations across the country. It contains articles that give publicity about the activities and special events of the organization; educational articles on historic buildings and architects; information on methods of preservation and economic aspects; and other subjects of interest to historic preservation.

The executive director, administrative assistant, director of communication and education, and preservation architect are

involved in slide presentations in their areas of expertise and interest. Their presentations are used to reach the general public, volunteer groups, government officials, seminar participants (e.g. seminars for contractors involved in rehabilitation), neighborhood groups, students and educators. Presentations are given with audio visual aids to enhance their messages. The Foundation has a Speakers' Bureau of volunteers that gives free slide-tape presentations on Kansas City's architectural history to interested groups.

The existing programs of the Foundation have been effective in meeting their objectives in the past; however, an evaluation needs to be made to determine if they will sufficiently serve to create a more effective public relations program which will earn greater public understanding and support, now and in the future. Whether the same methods of communication and activities that the Foundation now supports will reach the majority of the residents in Kansas City's older neighborhoods depends first on finding out the issues and needs of this public.

## Chapter 5

### DETERMINING NEEDS AND PERCEPTIONS IN KANSAS CITY NEIGHBORHOODS

Since effective communication begins with listening to the public that an organization serves, a questionnaire designed to get needed information is a helpful tool. With the focus on developing an effective public relations program to respond to neighborhood residents' needs, two previously mentioned studies (the Indiana Historic Preservation Survey - 1983 and Urban Displacement: A Reconnaissance) were used as the basis for a questionnaire directed toward inner-city neighborhood groups in Kansas City, Missouri. Solicited responses were to determine: (1) if there is an understanding of and support for preservation; (2) what services and information are needed; and; (3) if displacement or other issues are of concern in residential neighborhoods. Since the National Trust for Historic Preservation Conference of 1979 stressed the importance of the private sector in promoting preservation, the private, non-profit organization, Historic Kansas City Foundation was chosen as a vehicle for a public relations program to be developed in this thesis. One of the stated purposes of the Foundation when it was founded in 1974 was to work as a catalyst to other preservation groups in the community. Although many of the urban neighborhood groups selected to participate in the survey were not formed specifically to promote historic preservation, most were (and

are) interested in some aspect of urban environmental quality. Neighborhood organizations are a strong force in this city; there is the potential that they could provide a base for urban preservation. They could become a primary instrument "for the development, revitalization, stabilization (and) renewal" of Kansas City.<sup>1</sup> Establishing contact and developing communication with neighborhood groups is of primary importance. The questionnaire is one phase of a program to accomplish this. Assuming that neighborhood organization officers are representative of opinions and attitudes about historic preservation and that they are most aware of issues that would affect their constituency, their response to a questionnaire was believed to be beneficial.

#### The Questionnaire

Determination of the public's needs and perceptions can be the first step in implementing an effective program that helps promote the organization's goals. The standardized questionnaire was selected as the research instrument most likely to yield broad-based data to determine issues, activities and perceptions of preservation in Kansas City's inner-city neighborhoods. This type of questionnaire, if carefully constructed and controlled, is the most effective means of gathering data that reveals shared opinions among groups of people.<sup>2</sup> Obtaining a consensus of issues, knowledge, and needs is an important step toward developing effective programs and policies that promote neighborhood preservation. The possibility that group characteristics would

vary within the survey sampling created the possibility that the opinions might also vary. Since the purpose of this study was to find if differences between group types did exist, the responses to the questionnaire were expected to reveal such potential relationships.

Historic Kansas City Foundation was responsible for acquiring addresses of current neighborhood organization officers. Requests for these were mailed to presidents or chairmen of organizations whose names were obtained from a list provided by the Kansas City Department of Urban Development. H.K.C.F. mailed requests to the organization chairmen asking for the addresses of all their current officers. The response in this mailing was approximately average for such requests. (Ninety letters requesting addresses were mailed; thirty-six were returned.) Most that returned forms sent addresses of at least five officers (usually the president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer and parliamentarian.) Response to address requests was believed to be a factor that could have produced biased results in the data conclusions (e.g. whether a person had knowledge of H.K.C.F. may have influenced some that responded to the request.) Seven organization chairmen were contacted by telephone so that the total number of organizations from which addresses were obtained was forty-three. Since the majority of chairmen supplied addresses of five officers, it was decided to send questionnaire packets to five persons out of each organization. When fewer names were supplied, forms were sent to all those whose names were

made available.

The packet that was mailed contained a four-page questionnaire; a cover letter; a stamped, addressed return envelope; and a stamped post card that was addressed and to be mailed separately to H.K.C.F. The post card was included because of regulations by Kansas State University's Human Resource Committee that serves to protect the University against any findings that might be incriminating. If an organization member included his/her name for information or assistance from H.K.C.F., this needed to be separated from the response to the questionnaire that was intended to be anonymous.

One hundred-eighty-seven questionnaire packets were mailed with an allowable time of return of six weeks. Seventy-three were returned within this time period -- a response of thirty-nine percent. Of the forty-three associations that were in the mailing, thirty-three (77%) were represented in the response by at least one of their officers. In two cases, all five of the persons in a neighborhood organization returned the questionnaire. Table I lists in alphabetical order the organizations that were in the questionnaire mailing.

Table I  
Participating Neighborhood Organizations

Name of Organization	Number of Responses from Organization
Armour Hills Homes Association	1
Beacon Hill Community Council	2
Benton Boulevard Revitalization Project	1
Blue Hills Homes Corporation	0
Blue Valley Neighborhood Association	0
Country Club District Homes Association	5
Country Side Homes Association	5
Dunbar Community Council	0
East Community Team, Inc.	4
East Meyer Community Association	2
Euclid Avenue Block Club	1
Forgotten Homeowners Association	0
Freymans Neighborhood Club	1
Greenway Fields Home Association	4
Hyde Park Neighborhood Association	0
Independence Plaza Neighborhood Association	2
Indian Mound Neighborhood Association	1
Ivanhoe Neighborhood Council, Inc.	1
Key Coalition, Inc.	0
Linwood Homeowners Association, Inc.	0
Longfellow Community Association	1
Lykins Neighborhood Association	2

Manheim Park Neighborhood Association	3
New Bedford Heights Neighborhood Club	0
Northeast Scarritt Point Neighborhood Organization	3
Plaza Westport Neighborhood Association	2
Roanoke Protective Homes Association	4
Rockhill Homes Association	0
Sheffield Neighborhood Association	3
Sheraton Estates Neighborhood Association	3
Sixty-third & Brookside Merchants Association	2
South Plaza Neighborhood Association	1
South Westport Action Group	1
Southmoreland Neighborhood Association	4
Squier Park Neighborhood Association	4
Thirty-nine to Forty Genessee Block	1
Troost Midtown Association	1
Valentine Neighborhood Association	3
Vineyard Neighborhood Association	1
Volker Neighborhood Association	3
West Plaza Neighborhood Organization	1
Westside Housing Organization	1
Wornall Homestead Homes Association	1

When more than one response was received from a neighborhood, discrepancies in type of neighborhood (housing cost, age group, owner/renter ratio) existed; however, they were not diverse enough to be contradictory. An attempt was made to categorize by combining the multiple responses from an individual organization. The data from this was consistent with the results from the total individual analysis (e.g. preservation of buildings was rated low as an organization's major concern in both tabulations). Since multiple response did not vary drastically, it seemed safe to assume that when there was a single response from a neighborhood organization, that it was most likely a representative one.

The questionnaire attempted to define characteristics of neighborhoods by finding out the cost of homes, the percent of different age groups, and the renter/owner occupancy ratio within each neighborhood organization's area. Cost categories of single-family dwellings were listed in an attempt to define low, moderate and high cost housing. They were: "below \$80,000;" "\$80,000 to \$124,999;" and "above \$125,000." The age groups listed were "mostly young families," "mostly middle-age couples," "mostly elderly," "mostly singles," or "combination of the above." If the last choice applied, the respondent was asked to estimate the percent of each age group. The purpose of this category was to determine if certain neighborhoods have a dominance of a particular age group and especially, as might be expected in an inner-city neighborhood, if there is a high concentration of elderly in any of them. Attitudes about

preservation and ability to upgrade residences are two things that might show effects of the age group characteristic.

The percent of rental versus owner-occupied housing was also a variable considered that would reflect varying attitudes and needs. It is usually a pattern that when property changes from owned to rented maintenance and improvements decrease. This pattern has been a major contribution to slum conditions in many of the country's urban neighborhoods. When a large part of a community is controlled by landlords, problems of rehabilitation increase. Communicating a preservation message to a building owner whose sole interest is profit is considerably different from communicating with a property owner whose concern is a pleasing home environment. Lack of interest by landlords could be a major factor in the problems of preservation in some Kansas City neighborhoods. Organizations in several cities have been successful in promoting and achieving a higher ratio of property ownership which has, in turn, made neighborhood revitalization successful.

In evaluating that portion of the questionnaire that was to determine group classification, it seemed that age group categories could have included middle-age singles and widowed/single. Although there were no write-in responses giving a percent to this group, the possibility of it being significant in number exists. It was also determined in analysis of the data that cost of housing category could have served the purpose of classifying low and high cost housing if it had included only two choices -- "below \$80,000" and

"\$80,000 or above." Residents owning \$80,000 homes would probably respond to the questionnaire in a similar manner to those participants who owned homes valued above \$125,000. The fact that an area was predominately of above \$80,000 houses would indicate enough affluence to distinguish it from a neighborhood of mostly below \$80,000 homes. Different group classification variables might have altered the survey results; however it is believed that what was included on the existing form produced sufficient data for determining varying needs of resident groups.

Evaluation questions on the survey form were intended to produce information on: the amount of knowledge and activity in preservation by residents; preservation issues and resident needs; and familiarity with preservation organizations and awareness of media coverage. A problem in the evaluative questions was the lack of definition of the term "historic building." It may have caused confusion with some of the participants in the survey. Because some of the questionnaires returned were marked "not applicable," or something similar (one said that since the neighborhood had been developed in the late 20s and early 30s, the "historic" category did not apply to them), it was realized that the term should have been more clearly defined. The apparent confusion could also have been alleviated if "significant and/or historic buildings" had been used instead.

Questions that were included on the questionnaire that were to obtain information on identification of significant historic

buildings in neighborhood organization areas or on whether there had been or was an interest in National Register designation were for the benefit of Historic Kansas City Foundation. This information could have been obtained through the post cards that were mailed in the questionnaire packet, so that the Foundation could have had ready access to it. Another oversight was the omission of the problem of business and commercial encroachment on residential areas as an issue. It was a problem that was written by several respondents; one that more may have noted had it been included on the form. Several people wrote in that they had heard of Historic Kansas City Foundation through the media or the newspaper. These were not included on the questionnaire under this inquiry because the items listed were all methods of direct communication from the Foundation. The purpose of the question was to find if any one of its methods was more effective.

#### Analysis of Data

Although classification of group types was determined, the three factors of housing cost, rented/owned property ratio and age group did not yield sufficient information to make a definite statement to classify neighborhoods in this survey of Kansas City residents. The average response tended to be from members of organizations representing neighborhoods where cost of housing was less than \$80,000, at least 50% of the housing was owner-occupied, and the age group had a high percent of middle-age and elderly, or a fairly even mix of all age groups. In neighborhoods where housing was above \$80,000, there tended

to be less rental property and there were more middle-age couples and young families. Since the type of neighborhood organization that was in the mailing was not controlled, it is possible that the response may not be representative of the entire urban residential area.

Questions on the survey form were intended to yield data about the important preservation issues and concerns in Kansas City's urban neighborhoods. This public's knowledge of preservation and preservation organizations, their interest in preservation of buildings, and their awareness of preservation as presented through publications and the commercial news media was also obtained. Information in all these areas has important implications on public relations policies and programs that promote historic preservation.

#### Awareness of and Interest in Historic Buildings

Of the seventy-three respondents in the Kansas City neighborhood organization survey, thirty-three organization officers indicated that their organization had made successful or unsuccessful attempts to save an historic building in their area. Fifty-three of the participants in the questionnaire survey noted a building or buildings that were important to save. Forty-two of the seventy-three thought their organizations would be interested in working on National Register designation. These forty-two responses represented twenty-four neighborhood organizations.

Although historic preservation may not have been an organization's primary concern (see Table III), there seemed to

be a definite interest in preservation of historic or architecturally important buildings. Fifty-nine out of seventy-three (81%) said they "very much favored" historic preservation while thirteen (18%) said they were "somewhat in favor" of it.

In the 1983 Indiana Historic Preservation Survey cited in an earlier chapter, those interviewed were asked which preservation activities they thought to be the most important. Revitalizing downtown, revitalizing older residential areas, and saving buildings from being torn down, were the choices in that survey. Results showed revitalization of the downtown to be the highest priority while saving buildings from demolition was lowest. In this study of Kansas City residents, "fixing up, cleaning up and maintaining neighborhoods" was added as a separate category from neighborhood revitalization. Results in this survey showed the most important activity of historic preservation to be fixing up, cleaning up and maintaining neighborhoods which was followed by neighborhood revitalization. Downtown revitalization was third and saving buildings from demotion the least important concern. (See Table II)

Table II  
Importance of Preservation Activities

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Fix up, Clean up & Maintain Neighborhoods	70 of 73 (96%)	3 of 73 (4%)	0
Neighborhood Revitalization	59 of 73 (81%)	13 of 73 (18%)	1 of 73 (1%)
Downtown Revitalization	54 of 73 (74%)	16 of 73 (22%)	2 of 73 (4%)
Saving Buildings from Demolition	47 of 71 (66%)	24 of 71 (34%)	0

Important Priorities in Kansas City Neighborhoods

In the survey questionnaire, participants were asked to check the level of importance on a list of what would likely be priorities or objectives of non-profit organizations. There were five levels that could be checked. For purposes of analysis, most important priorities were considered to be the first two levels. Responses checked under these two levels were combined to determine the total number value of an item's high priority. In some instances, an individual item was not given a rating, in which case it was assumed the activity was of no interest to the organization. This occurred most often on the item "preservation of historic buildings." Only sixty-one of the seventy-three questionnaires returned had checked it on one of the five levels. This is indicative of the fact that preservation is not necessarily an objective of the organization, not that there is no interest in preservation.

Table III  
Neighborhood Organization Objectives

	Number 1 Organ. Objective	Number 2 Organ. Objective	Total of #1 and #2	% of 73 Responses
Maintenance of buildings and property	55	11	66	90%
Neighborhood beautification	47	18	65	89%
Maintaining property value and insuring marketability of homes	51	13	64	88%
Safety from crimes	52	12	64	88%
Fostering a quality of "neighborhoodness"	48	13	61	84%
Improvement of city provided services, such as street repair, etc.	40	14	54	74%
Preservation of historic buildings	19	13	32	44%

among the membership. The item that had the next fewest responses was "fostering a quality of neighborhoodness," which had seventy responses checked on one of the levels of importance. The possibility exists that lack of awareness of what is historically or architecturally important may have contributed to the low rating of historic preservation in the survey. One respondent commented there were "none (historic buildings) in the area."

Although preservation did not seem to be as high a priority as some of the other items listed, the total responses to other parts of the questionnaire indicated a high level of interest in historic preservation (fifty-nine out of seventy-three participants -- 81% -- were "very much in favor of preservation of historic buildings.) Because of this, it is believed, the opportunity to develop a broader base of support for preservation is present within already established neighborhood organizations. Effective communication of programs that promote methods of rehabilitation, and of knowledge of the benefits of preserving a neighborhood's material culture (i.e. its architecture) and social heritage could help accomplish a preservation organization's goals. The amenities that can be achieved through an historic preservation program would help provide a quality environment for a greater number of residents.

#### Neighborhood Interests and Issues

One of the purposes of the survey was to determine neighborhood organization member's knowledge of Historic Kansas City Foundation, its activities, and the services it provides. One of the questions asked the survey participants to indicate which of H.K.C.F.'s services would be of interest or relate to the needs of their neighborhood. There was no overwhelming request for any one particular service; however, "learning to research the history of a house or neighborhood" and "learning about tax incentives that apply to rehabilitation of older buildings" were the items with the greatest response (both were

checked thirty-eight times). Some of the questionnaires were returned with none of the items in this question checked; but in most instances, this happened when there was an apparent lack of interest in preservation activity by the respondent's organization.

In an attempt to determine if a more affluent neighborhood might request different services than a less affluent one, questionnaire responses were categorized by the housing values that were indicated. Above \$80,000 value housing and below \$80,000 value housing were used as category criteria. It was decided to use two rather than three categories since responses from the lower group tended to fit a pattern while the two upper categories (\$80,000-\$124,999 and above \$125,000) fit another. Results of the two groups' responses are provided in Table IV.

Two services that H.K.C.F. provides were requested more frequently than the other three listed services by above \$80,000 housing neighborhood group members. They were "learning about Kansas City's architectural history" and "technical assistance for restoration." With 40% of the total survey responses from this group, 48% of the requests for learning the architectural history were from it. Economic assistance was in greater demand from those neighborhoods where housing value was below \$80,000 (60% of the total survey response). 70% of this group requested assistance with determining cost effectiveness and 68% wanted information about tax incentives. "Learning to research the history of a house

or neighborhood" and "technical assistance" had a relatively proportionate response by each of the groups.

Table IV

Requests for H.K.C.F. Services

	Total requests	Total requests from upper group	% requests from above \$80,000
Learning about K.C.'s architectural history	25	12	48%
Learning to research the history of a house or neighborhood	38	15	39%
Assistance in determining cost effectiveness	33	10	30%
Learning about tax incentives for rehabilitation	38	12	32%
Technical assistance	29	12	41%

There was a significant difference in how people from the two types of neighborhoods responded to a question asking what were factors they thought contributed to problems of rehabilitation of residential property in their organization's area. The data that was gathered indicated the factors that were listed were not as serious problems for the above \$80,000 housing group as they were for the other group. Table V shows the urgency of the problems to the two groups.

Table V

## Problems of Neighborhood Rehabilitation

	Major Factor +\$80,000/-\$80,000	Contributing Factor +\$80,000/-\$80,000		
People cannot afford to improve their property	5	14	10	18
People accept their surroundings as is	1	2	9	21
Landlords have little interest in improvements	7	19	4	13
People do not know what to do	0	12	5	17
People are not in contact with organizations that can help	2	10	9	16
People are afraid of restrictions on historic property	1	4	6	12
The cost of rehabilitation would exceed the market value	3	13	6	18

Note: There were 29 total responses from +\$80,000 and 44 total responses from -\$80,000.

One of the things the questionnaire data reveals is that more affluent neighborhood residents know about and are able to take necessary steps to rehabilitate and maintain their neighborhoods. Whether this indicates more actual knowledge or whether there is less worry about solutions cannot be determined here. Obviously, the resources for solving any of the listed problems in rehabilitating property are alleviated where economic advantages are greater. What the data suggest is that assistance for inner-city neighborhood revitalization

is more crucial in those areas where housing value is low.

Combined analysis of below \$80,000 and above \$80,000 neighborhoods yielded the two most prevalent factors that inhibited rehabilitation in Kansas City's residential areas are: "people cannot afford to improve their property," and "landlords have little interest in improvements." "Fear of restrictions on designated historic property" ranked the lowest of problems in rehabilitating. Landlords who do not have interest in their property other than the profit from it was the single problem designated most often; it is probably the problem that has the most difficult solution.

#### Displacement as an Issue

Of the seventy-three questionnaires returned in the survey, displacement of residents was noted by twenty-six respondents. Six of the questionnaires with this response were from organization members from above \$80,000 housing neighborhoods. Upgrading and its effect of escalating the value of adjacent property was thought to be the prevalent cause of displacement in these neighborhoods. Deterioration, condemnation and more affluent buyers acquiring houses from elderly and low-income residents (i.e. gentrification) were causes cited most often in neighborhoods where housing values were below \$80,000. Encroachment of commercial development was a factor cited by some of the respondents. Kansas City Life Insurance Company, medical complexes and real estate firms purchasing property for future expansions were specifically mentioned.

George and Eunice Greer in their document Urban

Displacement: A Reconnaissance noted that displacement often is not realized in a neighborhood even though it is occurring.<sup>3</sup> The magnitude of the problem may not be reflected in this survey of Kansas City's residential areas if this conjecture is accurate. Why several residents move and what is happening to the property they leave behind often does not become obvious immediately.

Displacement is an especially emotional issue when low-income, elderly residents are forced to move because they cannot afford to maintain their homes and pay property taxes. When historic designation in an area causes property values to increase, a subsequent increase in taxes cannot help but cause some hostility toward preservation. The Kansas City survey indicated a high percent of elderly in the city's low housing value neighborhoods. Although it is not within the scope of this study to determine specifically if a particular age or economic group is a victim of displacement, the conditions of low-income, elderly displacement are present in Kansas City's residential areas. The solution to this problem, regardless of the cause, is complex; and, it will most likely continue to be an emotional issue in neighborhood preservation.

Knowledge of Preservation and  
Preservation Organizations

Part of the questionnaire mailed to neighborhood organization members was to find out how familiar the participants were with organizations that were concerned with either preservation or neighborhood improvement. They were

asked to check their experience with or knowledge of five different organizations. Historic Kansas City Foundation and Kansas City Neighborhood Alliance were the organizations most familiar to the seventy-three who responded to the questionnaire (sixty-four and sixty-two respectively indicated this.) Landmarks Commission, which is an agency of the Kansas City Planning Commission, was known to fifty-seven. Only thirty-nine respondents had knowledge of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and twenty-five knew of Missouri Heritage Trust. (See Table VI for complete data.)

Since the concern in this study was to find out more about Historic Kansas City Foundation's impact on the public, its methods of communication were listed to see if it could be determined which method was most popular. The newspaper, which was not included on the list because of it not being a method of direct contact with the public, was written in by seven of the participants. Four wrote in that they knew of the organization through friends or relatives. Table VII lists the methods of communication and the frequency that each was checked.

Radio, television, magazines and newspapers greatly influence public opinion about historic preservation. Coverage by these media creates an awareness that would be impossible for an individual organization to achieve. Taking advantage of these public relations tools is crucial for understanding, acceptance, and support of historic preservation.

Table VI  
Familiarity with Organizations

	Member	Have rec'd information	Heard of it	No Knowledge of it
Historic Kansas City Foundation	8	22	34	8
Kansas City Land- marks Commission	2	18	32	15
Kansas City Neigh- borhood Alliance	9	27	26	9
Missouri Heritage Trust	1	2	22	46
National Trust for Historic Preservation	2	12	25	33

The survey in this study sought to determine which, if any, medium generated the most communication about historic preservation. Participants were asked if they thought the various media messages gave the impression of being favorable, unfavorable or noncommittal of preservation. Results from the questionnaire indicated that newspapers supplied audiences with the most communication (at least, their news features made the greatest impression); and that what was presented was, almost overwhelmingly, either favorable or non-committal. (See Table VIII for complete results.) More effective use of these commercial news media increases chances for preservation messages to reach a much wider audience.

Table VII  
H.K.C.F.'s Methods of Communication

Method	Number of Times Checked
Brochures	32
Possum Trot Festival	26
Tours, lectures, conferences	16
Special mailings	15
H.K.C.F. Gazette	12
A direct working relationship	9
Participation in housing rehab program	9
Special events	7
Monthly calendar	4

Extended Public Relations Studies

Although the data that was gathered in the survey supports the hypothesis that different groups of people may require different services and information in regard to historic preservation, a more controlled study could yield more specific data. Since there was little control over the neighborhood groups that were in the questionnaire mailing, there were no criteria established to insure that the participants represented the population of Kansas City's inner-city neighborhoods.

In the final analysis, total responses were not proportionate to neighborhood cost of housing type. There was a greater response per organization from those groups representing neighborhoods where housing was above

Table VIII  
Media Coverage of Preservation

	Favorable	Unfavorable	Non-committal
Radio	18	0	3
Television	35	1	8
Magazine	25	0	0
Newspaper	55	1	6

\$80,000. Twenty-nine of the seventy-three questionnaires were returned from this group; they represented eight of the thirty-three neighborhood organizations. This means that the rate of response was 3.62 persons per organization from the above \$80,000 housing group compared to 1.76 persons per organization from below \$80,000 housing neighborhoods. If this difference affected the final results, it cannot be determined here. Focused interviewing of selected participants would be necessary to determine this.

The data, however, support the conclusions of the background research for this study. Significant findings were:

1. People who live in urban neighborhoods of higher cost housing tended to show the greatest interest in responding.
2. Neighborhood groups that represent different economic levels do not have the same needs nor do preservation issues (such as displacement) have the same effect on them.

3. Problems in rehabilitation of housing stock are greater in lower value housing neighborhoods.
4. There is a significant interest in Kansas City's architectural heritage in inner-city residential areas.
5. Preservation activities directed at neighborhoods are considered by Kansas City residents to be the most important of historic preservation concerns.
6. Displacement is a significant issue in Kansas City's urban neighborhoods.
7. In the coverage of preservation issues, projects and programs by the various media, the newspaper is the medium recognized most often.

One disturbing thing that occurred in the course of the survey was the lack of response for information or assistance received by H.K.C.F. Even though the questionnaire response indicated a substantial interest in preservation activity, only twenty-five of the post cards included in the survey packet were returned to the Foundation. What this means is not clear; inclusion of a card to be mailed separately may have been confusing to some. However, since known obstacles to returning them were absent, the fact of such a low response should be of concern.

In general, the Kansas City neighborhood organization survey produced basic information that would be useful in developing programs and policies that could benefit the city's residents. More specific data could be obtained in future studies by conducting focused interviews with those persons who

participated in this research (several wrote their names and addresses on their completed questionnaires.) It would also be useful to contact neighborhood organization members that did not participate, especially if there is a possibility of their emphasizing a different aspect. Another extended research possibility would be to administer a more concentrated study of a few selected neighborhoods. This could also produce more specific and more useful data.

Neighborhood revitalization in Kansas City could gain impetus with concentrated effort. Successfully preserving that which is worth keeping could be expected by the sort of input and participation that further research would encourage. It could increase both public awareness and communication between those groups concerned with buildings, whether their concern is for historic preservation or for improved housing.

Being aware and communicating ideas are essential ingredients for effectively planning developments in urban residential neighborhoods. A 1982 study documented in The Journal of Urban Analysis revealed organization within neighborhoods to be one of the most important methods of achieving effective community planning.<sup>4</sup> Also within these groups is the potential for achieving those objectives of historic preservation that are consistent with their own goals.

Notes

1. Goering, "National Neighborhood Movement," p. 506.
2. John Zeisel, Inquiry by Design (Monterey, CA: Brooks & Cole Publishing Co., 1981), p. 157.
3. Grier, Urban Displacement, p. 74.
4. Timothy D. Mead and William J. McCoy, "Citizen Defined Priorities in Urban Growth: A Case Study," in The Journal of Urban Analysis 7 (1982): 22.

## Chapter 6

### A NEIGHBORHOOD PRESERVATION PROGRAM PROPOSAL

Since the results of the Kansas City neighborhood survey indicated that lower-cost housing groups might require different historic preservation programs than upper level housing groups, policies and programs that respond to such needs are necessary. Although the questionnaire did not reveal prominent differences in neighborhood types, there was sufficient correlation of data to establish an economic/need element (upper level cost housing groups tended to have different needs than lower cost housing groups.) Historic Kansas City Foundation's desire to establish a more effective communication program with both of these neighborhood group-types seems contingent on responding to that element.

Residents from upper level housing neighborhoods appeared to be more inclined to participate in the survey. This may be an indication of greater interest in or more knowledge of historic preservation in general. It is likely that this group-type has more exposure to the aesthetic appeal of older buildings and neighborhoods. Monetary concerns would be less of an issue for them; they would be more able to provide for their basic housing needs. The likelihood of economics being an issue with the lower cost housing groups, however, was brought out in the survey results. Although economic concerns differed between the two groups, it would be appropriate to respond to both with programs and policies that create more

awareness and appreciation of the city's historic architecture. Communication of preservation objectives to economically advantaged residents would benefit Historic Kansas City Foundation in that increased support (in membership and monetary donations) for the organization could be expected; although, the organization could reap these benefits from less affluent residents as well.

Cost of rehabilitation is the major concern in most low-cost housing neighborhoods. Other issues that are of concern to the residents in these areas are tied to economic ones. Historic Kansas City Foundation has already addressed the problems of economics of preservation in revolving fund and housing rehabilitation programs; however, efforts have contributed only slightly in solving the city's neighborhood preservation problems.

There are several ways and means of implementing financial programs that facilitate neighborhood revitalization. "Sweat equity" programs, where resident labor provides otherwise unaffordable amenities, could be administered in economically depressed areas. Expanded activity by the Foundation in seeking economic aid for housing rehabilitation could benefit the lower socio-economic groups and would contribute to the preservation of Kansas City's neighborhoods.

Basic public relations principles and tools promise the most effective solutions to the problem of communicating preservation ideas and implementing change in the city's residential areas. Listening to residents' ideas and

responding to their needs by developing programs and policies that are in the public interest are important if H.K.C.F. is to achieve public understanding and acceptance. Demographic, cultural and economic changes that are occurring must be recognized and understood by the Foundation in order to create effective programs. Responding to these changes is essential for a favorable public opinion of Historic Kansas City Foundation and of historic preservation.

#### H.K.C.F.'s Public Relations Strengths and Weaknesses

Much of the success of H.K.C.F. has been due to the effectiveness of past public relations programs and policies. The organization possesses several public relations strengths that are valuable to its communications with the public. In its association with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, it has an excellent available source for getting facts about preservation as well as the advantage of contact with this reputable national organization. Another strength is an already existing favorable public opinion of the aesthetic value of historic buildings. Also, the Foundation employs a qualified staff headed by an executive director experienced in public relations communications. They appear to have a clear understanding of the organization's role within the community structure. An active and enthusiastic group of volunteers lends strength to the organization's activities; however, as another one of the foundation's publics, better communication with them could increase the potential of those activities.

The organization makes effective use of the various news

media. By maintaining a good working relationship with Kansas City's newspapers, television and radio personnel, the organization and its activities have received favorable publicity and coverage in the past. It also has had access to free publicity for special events through public service announcements and billboard advertisement. The Foundation publishes an informative and well-formatted bi-monthly newspaper that has the support of various Kansas City businesses. These strengths, as well as recognition by the staff of the importance of public relations tools and principles in achieving their goals, give H.K.C.F. a strong base for an effective program directed at the city's neighborhood organizations.

Although neighborhood residents have been identified as an important public to the Foundation and the research questionnaire has identified some needs and issues, an assessment of the Foundation's public relations weaknesses is necessary in order to address the issues involved. H.K.C.F.'s past programs have been directed toward these objectives which were outlined in Chapter 2: (1) raising money; (2) enlisting volunteer support; (3) winning public acceptance; and (4) marketing programs and services. It is in its lack of having the fifth objective, developing communication with the "disadvantaged" public, that the organization's greatest public relations weakness lies. A more concentrated effort to achieve this objective would greatly strengthen the Foundation's public image, which would, at the same time, make its present

objectives more achievable. All five objectives should be the basis of H.K.C.F.'s programs.

Another weakness is the absence of written current public relations goals and policies. The staff and board of directors should establish and document these specifically so that the above mentioned objectives could be reached. Any neighborhood preservation program developed and implemented by the organization should be guided by those policies and goals. The advantage of setting organizational goals that serve as a basis for its programs is that it can make evaluation of activities easier. Written goals would also help the staff and board focus on the important aspects of their services and activities, making the achievement of better coordinated programs possible. Established objectives and goals could aid in giving the staff a direction in their activities that is more difficult to achieve when each is working with his/her individual concept of what is the organization's purpose.

To facilitate a more effective neighborhood preservation program, the staff should find and implement ways of coordinating the Foundation's efforts with other agencies (city, state, national) that are involved in preservation and community development. A combined effort, especially in the area of seeking financial assistance, would increase opportunities of bringing economic aid to areas of the city where residents would otherwise be unable to rehabilitate and maintain their neighborhoods.

### Neighborhood Preservation - Making It a Priority

Before a neighborhood preservation program is initiated, a firm base for it should be established. The following suggestions to set and implement a goal oriented program could be adapted and used to complement any of H.K.C.F.'s activities:

1. Write out and make available the public relations goals and policies to the board of directors, staff and membership.
2. Define each staff member's public relations functions.
3. Obtain and use pertinent data from questionnaire survey.
4. Determine the Foundation's short-range and long-range goals for neighborhood preservation. (These should be written out and made available to all who are involved in the neighborhood revitalization project.)
5. Develop a program that fits the needs of Kansas City's residential public who could benefit from the Foundation's activities (a specific program is suggested on page 85-86.)
6. Make an effort to coordinate activities with other organizations concerned with preservation and community planning. Involve other individuals and organizations concerned with urban housing by informing them of the activities of the Foundation (i.e. the Kansas City American Institute of Architects, realtors, developers, community organizations, city and county officials.)
7. Meet with the Landmarks Commission staff to discuss each organization's role in the community's preservation

efforts. Find a way to promote both organizations' individual and collective endeavors.

8. Write and make available to H.K.C.F.'s staff and board of directors a guide to effective media communication.

During the implementation of a neighborhood rehabilitation program, the following suggestions would aid public relations communications:

1. Establish and maintain media contacts. Make an effort to promote "newsworthy" events.
2. Evaluate programs periodically to determine if objectives are being met.
3. Make use of additional opinion surveys as a guide in developing or changing programs as needed.

Any program for the public's benefit that H.K.C.F. embarks upon should be based on the above suggestions. Searching for and being aware of factors that could effect or aid the organization's goal-oriented activities are also important for a successful program.

The neighborhood organization survey used in this study revealed some of the attitudes and issues that H.K.C.F. needs to be aware of to develop a more effective public relations program for neighborhood residents. This was an important step in the communication process between the agency and its public. With the knowledge obtained from the survey and a set of written goals, the staff should first evaluate its present activities that affect neighborhood preservation. Those programs that appear to be effective, that achieve the

Foundation's goals and meet the needs of this public, should be maintained; those activities that do not meet the criteria should be eliminated. The establishment of neighborhood preservation as a high priority suggests that activities directed in other areas might better serve the organization and its public if they were redirected to promote this major goal. Urban neighborhood preservation programs in other cities could be evaluated to see if they could be administered feasibly by the Foundation in Kansas City neighborhoods. H.K.C.F. could meet residents' needs and meet their preservation goals with the development of a program that considers the economic differences in the city's neighborhoods.

When a desired approach has been decided, concentrating on a method of communication to promote the concepts and goals is important. The results of the survey in this study could be of assistance in the communication method most likely to produce the best results (see Table VIII, Chapter 5).

#### Programs that Assist Neighborhood Preservation

At the present time, there are two major national factors that support saving and using old buildings. Both are important instruments to aid in solving problems of building preservation and urban housing. One is National Register designation, which identifies and certifies those areas and buildings that contribute to a community's historic and cultural significance. Designation aids preservation in that it increases the chances of upgrading a neighborhood. In many instances, the market appeal of houses in historic districts

increases. It also makes it possible for tax credits that would otherwise not be as great. The economic incentive introduced in the 1981 Environmental Recovery Tax Act is another factor that has been of great assistance to historic preservation. Since its inception, this legislation has had a tremendous influence on the economic feasibility of preservation projects. Although the ERTA's twenty-five percent tax rebate can only be used for housing where certified historic residential property yields a profit (rental property), some benefit can be realized where only a percent of a building is used commercially.

Other economic aids that offer feasibility to neighborhood revitalization are: tenant corporation financing, Department of Housing and Urban Development grants, rental subsidies, and corporate urban affairs support programs. Private non-profit agency grants should not be overlooked as a possibility for economic assistance.

A neighborhood rehabilitation program that would benefit all inner--city residents needs careful planning. Beginning with a small scale program in a specified area, the Foundation could then expand and use it as a model for a broader program. The following activities could be incorporated into a neighborhood preservation program:

1. Support and participate in activities to facilitate National Register Historic District certification in Kansas City's inner-city residential areas.
2. Gather information about the 1981 ERTA - the benefits,

- who could qualify, to whom it could be marketed, how to market it, etc.
3. Act as consultant for rehabilitation projects to facilitate National Park Service approval process of Tax Act rehabilitation.
  4. Market preservation to corporations (many large companies have urban affairs departments that are or should be actively interested in solutions to urban housing problems.)
  5. Gather information about financial assistance for low-income residents to encourage ownership and participation in neighborhood revitalization (e.g. H.U.D. programs, private and public agency grants.)
  6. Gather information about rental assistance for low-income families.
  7. Actively market information about financial assistance to the appropriate publics.

A Preservation Project  
for Economically Depressed Neighborhoods

Once Historic Kansas City Foundation has built a program based on the previous suggestions, specific public relations activities to facilitate physical changes in neighborhoods should begin. In summary, the suggestions are:

1. Determine goals.
2. Prepare the staff and board of directors for their responsibilities.

3. Gather information on needs and perceptions.
4. Establish good working relations with other agencies and with the people in the project area.
5. Research, have knowledge of and promote information of and aids to (e.g. financial assistance) preservation.
6. Actively market a program that will identify sources of capital, generate it into feasible projects, gain interest and support of investors and home owners, and secure the interest and support of the news media.

The project should begin by the selection of a neighborhood to work with. It should be one that has mostly low-cost housing, and is represented by an association. Although it is not essential, it is advisable to start the selection process by first considering the neighborhoods whose organization members responded in the Kansas City neighborhood survey. East Community Team, Inc., Lykins Neighborhood Association, Manheim Park Neighborhood Association, Northeast Scarritt Point Neighborhood Association, Squier Park Neighborhood Association, Valentine Neighborhood Association and Volker Neighborhood Association (all representing below \$80,000 neighborhoods) had at least two members of their organizations responding, with at least one from each group expressing an interest in their organization working for Historic District designation. Any of these neighborhoods would make a good project choice.

Consideration should begin with an assessment of each of these neighborhoods -- size of the area, resident interest in preservation, quality and type of buildings, location, economic

potential, and other amenities.

Securing aid for financing a neighborhood project is the next step. Private corporations and lending institutions are sources of funding. H.K.C.F. should seek out and work with both these institutions to establish a partnership in a "creative financing" arrangement. Also, as mentioned previously, the Foundation should obtain information on other types of financial assistance that might be available to city residents (e.g. H.U.D. grants.)

Landlords (including absentee landlords) should be contacted and made aware of financial benefits (tax incentives) of rehabilitation of their buildings, as well as, additional gains from upgrading the neighborhood. The Foundation should encourage those who choose to participate to keep a portion of their property for moderate- and low-income units.

H.K.C.F. should keep a continuing working relationship with residents to insure their input and participation. Residents should be included in caring for common areas and encouraged to maintain the character of their district. Both renters and owners should be informed of assistance available to them. The Foundation should work with both groups for a unified neighborhood effort.

During the course of the project, television, radio and newspapers should be informed when visible achievements have been made, or when a newsworthy event occurs. Whether the neighborhood organization or H.K.C.F. issues a news release, it should follow a standard format and the content be timely.

Once the project is established, the neighborhood organization may be able to take over the administration of a continuing improvement and maintenance project, with H.K.C.F. used in an advisory capacity. This way, neighborhood cohesiveness is more possible; it would also free the Foundation to develop the same or a similar project in another neighborhood. Keeping as much of the decision-making as possible within a neighborhood group helps to insure that the needs of its residents are met.

One problem that was realized in analyzing the questionnaire results was that many people seemed to have a misunderstanding of what constitutes an historic building. It should be a goal of the Foundation to educate the public (residents and others) in the use of the term.

#### The Benefits of a Humanitarian Approach

As an organizational objective, H.K.C.F. should develop a program that will reach those urban residents who have the least opportunities for housing. They should further this by encouraging landlords and other investors who qualify for ERTA credits to make accommodations for low-income residents. With this as a major objective, achieving the other non-profit agency objectives (see page 80) would be easier. A program that is in the public interest would be more easily marketed, especially if it has proved successful on a pretest scale. Positive media coverage of preservation as a solution to one of the city's social and environmental problems would likely follow, which could result in winning favorable public opinion

and acceptance. With this acceptance, support through volunteer enlistment and donation of funds for the organization's activities could be expected.

Under strong non-profit organization leadership, successful neighborhood preservation has been accomplished in several American cities. Besides providing more livable places for people, a concentrated effort for housing rehabilitation has brought amenities such as increased retail sales, property values and property tax revenues to these urban areas. Reductions in crime rates have occurred in several of these cities' neighborhoods after revitalization.<sup>1</sup>

Predictions that there will be a continual migration back to this country's inner-cities in the 1980s and that the movement will steadily increase into the 1990s behoove us to face the problems of urban housing immediately.<sup>2</sup> If preservationists ignore this trend and do not become actively involved, their objectives cannot be met. If the imminent demand occurs within the next decade, delayed action will make it impossible to retrieve the historic character of a place or to provide quality, equally-affordable housing for urban residents. Historic preservation activities must accommodate the housing needs of moderate- and low-income groups, as well as those of more affluent groups.

Notes

1. deSeve Economics Associates, Inc., Economic Impacts of Development, 1983, Appendix p. xvi.
2. Cutlip, p. 107. (Reprinted from World, "America's Destiny for the 1980s," Roy Amara.)

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**APPENDIX I**

**Questionnaire and Cover Letter**



## Department of Architecture

College of Architecture and Design  
Seaton Hall  
Manhattan, Kansas 66506  
913-532-5953

February 14, 1984

Dear Neighborhood Organization Member,

Preservation of historic and architecturally significant buildings is important to all citizens in the community. Improvement and maintenance of older buildings enhances the image of the city and brings benefits to all. The enclosed questionnaire is to give you, as a representative of your community, an opportunity to participate in a study that is intended to further the involvement of citizens in the awareness and appreciation of Kansas City's architectural heritage.

Within the last two decades, preservationists in this country have become increasingly concerned with the quality of the environment, both man-made and natural. A planning process that considers the aesthetic, economic and cultural aspects of preserving architecture is important.

I am a graduate student in the College of Architecture and Design at Kansas State University currently doing research for a master's thesis. The information you supply on this survey form will be useful to me and to Historic Kansas City Foundation in assessing the needs of neighborhood organizations such as yours. It is also to determine the degree of understanding of historic preservation. Better services to neighborhood organizations is the goal of this survey. Please realize that your response is important. A more effective program can be developed only if there is an understanding of the needs of people in the community.

Please take a few minutes to read and respond to the questionnaire and return it in the enclosed, stamped envelope as soon as possible. Your answers will be confidential. I appreciate your participation in this study.

Sincerely,

Mary Jo Winder

#####  
#####  
#### KANSAS CITY NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION SURVEY ####  
## FEBRUARY 1984 ##

# This questionnaire is being sent to members of some of Kansas  
City's neighborhood organizations. Please respond and return it in the  
enclosed envelope as soon as possible.

What is the name of your organization? \_\_\_\_\_

Has your organization been successful in saving an historic building from  
deterioration or demolition?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, specify \_\_\_\_\_

Have you experienced an unsuccessful attempt (or attempts) to save an  
historic building?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, specify \_\_\_\_\_

Are you aware of a building in your area that may have importance because  
of association with a notable person or historic event?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, specify \_\_\_\_\_

Are there any underutilized or deteriorating historic or architecturally  
important buildings in your organization's area you think are important to  
save?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, specify \_\_\_\_\_

Has your organization done any research toward putting a building on the  
National Register?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, specify \_\_\_\_\_

Would this be something your organization would be interested in doing?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

What would you say are problems in rehabilitating historic property in  
your area? Mark XX for major factors and X for contributing factors.

- \_\_\_\_ People cannot afford to improve their property
- \_\_\_\_ People accept their surroundings as is
- \_\_\_\_ Landlords have little interest in improvements
- \_\_\_\_ People do not know what to do
- \_\_\_\_ People are not in contact with organizations that can help
- \_\_\_\_ People are afraid of restrictions on designated historic property
- \_\_\_\_ The cost of rehabilitation would exceed the market value of the  
property after improvements
- \_\_\_\_ Other. Specify \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Kansas City Foundation provides information and services to promote  
historic preservation. Which of the following would be of interest or re-

late to your organization's needs?

- Learning about Kansas City's architectural history
- Learning to research the history of a house or neighborhood
- Assistance in determining cost effectiveness of preserving a building (is it affordable?)
- Learning about tax incentives that apply to rehabilitation of older buildings
- Technical assistance for restoration

Check the level of importance to your organization of the following. 1 indicating very important and 5 indicating not important.

	1	2	3	4	5
Preservation of historic buildings	—	—	—	—	—
Maintenance of buildings and property	—	—	—	—	—
Fostering a quality of "neighborhoodness"	—	—	—	—	—
Neighborhood beautification	—	—	—	—	—
Maintaining property value and insuring marketability of homes	—	—	—	—	—
Improvement of city provided services, such as street repair, etc.	—	—	—	—	—
Safety from crimes	—	—	—	—	—
Other. Specify _____	—	—	—	—	—

Do you have any knowledge of the following Historic Preservation groups?

I am/my organization is a member	Have rec'd information/ assistance or attended an activity	Have heard of it or its activities	No knowledge of it
----------------------------------	--	------------------------------------	--------------------

Historic Kansas City Foundation	—	—	—
Kansas City Landmarks Commission	—	—	—
Kansas City Neighborhood Alliance	—	—	—
Missouri Heritage Trust	—	—	—
National Trust for Historic Preservation	—	—	—

If you checked that you are familiar with Historic Kansas City Foundation, which means of communication or relationship have you experienced?

- Historic Kansas City Foundation brochures
- Historic Kansas City Foundation Gazette (bi-monthly news bulletin)
- Special mailing
- Monthly calendar
- Possum Trot Festival
- A direct working relationship
- Tours, lectures or conferences

(Answers continue on next page)

- Special events  
 Participation in housing rehabilitation program  
 Other. Specify \_\_\_\_\_

Are you in favor of preservation of historic or architecturally important structures?

- Very much in favor       Somewhat in favor  
 Do not favor       Indifferent

If you checked "very much in favor" or "somewhat in favor" in the previous question, which of the following do you think are important reasons for the preservation of historic structures?

- Historic structures are a part of our heritage and should be saved for future generations  
 The quality of construction and craftsmanship in old buildings cannot be duplicated today  
 Tearing down a building is a waste of existing resources  
 Other. Specify \_\_\_\_\_

Which preservation concerns do you think are important? Please rank each.

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important
Revitalizing downtown	—	—	—
Revitalizing residential areas	—	—	—
Saving historic buildings from demolition	—	—	—
Fixing up, cleaning up and maintaining neighborhoods	—	—	—

Do you recall hearing or reading about preservation of buildings or neighborhoods within the last 12 months?

Yes  No

In which of the media do you remember hearing or reading such references?

- Radio       Magazine  
 Television       Newspaper

If you checked any of the above media, was the image of historic preservation presented in a favorable or unfavorable light?

	Favorable	Unfavorable	Non-committal
Radio	—	—	—
Television	—	—	—
Magazine	—	—	—
Newspaper	—	—	—

What is the general price range of single family houses in the area your organization represents?

Below \$80,000       \$80,000-\$124,999       Over \$125,000

What would you say is the population makeup of the area your organization represents?

- Mostly young families
  - Mostly middle-age couples
  - Mostly elderly
  - Mostly singles
  - Combination of the above. Estimate % of each, please

Occupancy of residential housing in this area (including apartment buildings) is:

- Almost 100% owner occupied
  - Mostly owner occupied, some rental
  - About 50% owner occupied, 50% rental
  - Mostly rental, some owner occupied
  - Almost all rental property

Is there any commercial property (not including rental housing property) in the area your organization serves?

Yes        No         
If yes, specify \_\_\_\_\_

Is displacement of moderate and low-income residents occurring in your organization's area?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what would you say is the cause of displacement?

- Property being condemned
  - People buying out elderly and low-income residents who cannot afford taxes and mortgages
  - Upper income residents improving properties so that adjacent properties become unaffordable for moderate and low-income residents
  - Other. Specify \_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSE! Please feel free to make suggestions or comments on another sheet and return it with this form to:

Mary Jo Winder  
Department of Architecture  
Seaton Hall  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan, KS 66506

If you would be interested in having Historic Kansas City Foundation contact you about buildings in your area or services they provide, please mail the enclosed postcard to them.

APPENDIX II

Question Tabulations

#####  
#### KANSAS CITY NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION SURVEY ####  
## FEBRUARY 1984 ##

# This questionnaire is being sent to members of some of Kansas  
City's neighborhood organizations. Please respond and return it in the  
enclosed envelope as soon as possible.

What is the name of your organization? \_\_\_\_\_

Has your organization been successful in saving an historic building from  
deterioration or demolition?

Yes 21 No 46 If yes, specify \_\_\_\_\_

Have you experienced an unsuccessful attempt (or attempts) to save an  
historic building?

Yes 10 No 59 If yes, specify \_\_\_\_\_

Are you aware of a building in your area that may have importance because  
of association with a notable person or historic event?

Yes 62 No 29 If yes, specify \_\_\_\_\_

Are there any underutilized or deteriorating historic or architecturally  
important buildings in your organization's area you think are important to  
save?

Yes 33 No 30 If yes, specify \_\_\_\_\_

Has your organization done any research toward putting a building on the  
National Register?

Yes 15 No 55 If yes, specify \_\_\_\_\_

Would this be something your organization would be interested in doing?

Yes 42 No 20 \_\_\_\_\_

What would you say are problems in rehabilitating historic property in  
your area? Mark XX for major factors and X for contributing factors.

- 19XX, 28X People cannot afford to improve their property  
3XXX, 30X People accept their surroundings as is  
26XXX, 17X Landlords have little interest in improvements  
12XXX, 22X People do not know what to do  
12XXX, 25X People are not in contact with organizations that can help  
5XXX, 18X People are afraid of restrictions on designated historic property  
16XXX, 24X The cost of rehabilitation would exceed the market value of the  
                    property after improvements  
      \* Other. Specify \_\_\_\_\_

Historic Kansas City Foundation provides information and services to promote  
historic preservation. Which of the following would be of interest or re-

late to your organization's needs?

- 25 Learning about Kansas City's architectural history
- 38 Learning to research the history of a house or neighborhood
- 33 Assistance in determining cost effectiveness of preserving a building (is it affordable?)
- 38 Learning about tax incentives that apply to rehabilitation of older buildings
- 29 Technical assistance for restoration

Check the level of importance to your organization of the following. 1 indicating very important and 5 indicating not important.

	1	2	3	4	5
Preservation of historic buildings	<u>19</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>
Maintenance of buildings and property	<u>55</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Fostering a quality of "neighborhoodness"	<u>48</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>
Neighborhood beautification	<u>47</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
Maintaining property value and insuring marketability of homes	<u>51</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
Improvement of city provided services, such as street repair, etc.	<u>40</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>
Safety from crimes	<u>52</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>
Other. Specify _____	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

Do you have any knowledge of the following Historic Preservation groups?

I am/my organization is a member	Have rec'd information/ assistance or attended an activity	Have heard of it or its activities	No knowledge of it
Historic Kansas City Foundation	<u>8</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>34</u>
Kansas City Landmarks Commission	<u>11</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>37</u>
Kansas City Neighborhood Alliance	<u>9</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>
Missouri Heritage Trust	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>18</u>
National Trust for Historic Preservation	<u>3</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>25</u>

If you checked that you are familiar with Historic Kansas City Foundation, which means of communication or relationship have you experienced?

- 32 Historic Kansas City Foundation brochures
- 12 Historic Kansas City Foundation Gazette (bi-monthly news bulletin)
- 15 Special mailing
- 4 Monthly calendar
- 26 Possum Trot Festival
- 9 A direct working relationship
- 16 Tours, lectures or conferences

(Answers continue on next page)

- 7 Special events  
9 Participation in housing rehabilitation program  
Other. Specify \_\_\_\_\_

Are you in favor of preservation of historic or architecturally important structures?

- 59 Very much in favor      18 Somewhat in favor  
0 Do not favor      2 Indifferent

If you checked "very much in favor" or "somewhat in favor" in the previous question, which of the following do you think are important reasons for the preservation of historic structures?

- 60 Historic structures are a part of our heritage and should be saved for future generations  
55 The quality of construction and craftsmanship in old buildings cannot be duplicated today  
45 Tearing down a building is a waste of existing resources  
Other. Specify \_\_\_\_\_

Which preservation concerns do you think are important? Please rank each.

	Very important	Somewhat important	Not important
Revitalizing downtown	<u>54</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>2</u>
Revitalizing residential areas	<u>91</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>2</u>
Saving historic buildings from demolition	<u>47</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>0</u>
Fixing up, cleaning up and maintaining neighborhoods	<u>70</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>0</u>

Do you recall hearing or reading about preservation of buildings or neighborhoods within the last 12 months?

Yes 69      No 4

In which of the media do you remember hearing or reading such references?

- 18 Radio      21 Magazine  
45 Television      65 Newspaper

If you checked any of the above media, was the image of historic preservation presented in a favorable or unfavorable light?

	Favorable	Unfavorable	Non-committal
Radio	<u>18</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>
Television	<u>35</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>8</u>
Magazine	<u>25</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Newspaper	<u>55</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>6</u>

What is the general price range of single family houses in the area your organization represents?

Below \$80,000 44      \$80,000-\$124,999 18      Over \$125,000 11

What would you say is the population makeup of the area your organization represents?

- 13 Mostly young families
  - 24 Mostly middle-age couples
  - 19 Mostly elderly
  - 11 Mostly singles
  - 30 Combination of the above. Estimate % of each, please
- 

Occupancy of residential housing in this area (including apartment buildings) is:

- 17 Almost 100% owner occupied
- 31 Mostly owner occupied, some rental
- 22 About 50% owner occupied, 50% rental
- 2 Mostly rental, some owner occupied
- 0 Almost all rental property

Is there any commercial property (not including rental housing property) in the area your organization serves?

Yes 48 No 22  
If yes, specify \_\_\_\_\_

---

Is displacement of moderate and low-income residents occurring in your organization's area?

Yes 26 No 47

If yes, what would you say is the cause of displacement?

- 8 Property being condemned
  - 10 People buying out elderly and low-income residents who cannot afford taxes and mortgages
  - 10 Upper income residents improving properties so that adjacent properties become unaffordable for moderate and low-income residents
  - Other. Specify \_\_\_\_\_
- 

THANK YOU FOR YOUR RESPONSE! Please feel free to make suggestions or comments on another sheet and return it with this form to:

Mary Jo Winder  
Department of Architecture  
Seaton Hall  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan, KS 66506

If you would be interested in having Historic Kansas City Foundation contact you about buildings in your area or services they provide, please mail the enclosed postcard to them.

Historic Kansas City Foundation:  
A Study of Public Relations with  
Urban Neighborhood Organizations

Mary Jo Winder  
B.A., University of Alabama in Huntsville, 1982

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An Abstract of a Master's Thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree

Master of Architecture

College of Architecture and Design  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan, Kansas

1984

ABSTRACT

Historic Kansas City Foundation -  
A Study of Public Relations with  
Urban Neighborhood Organizations

The principles and methods of communication of an organization's public relations determines how that organization is perceived and whether its activities are understood and accepted. Communication with one's public begins with listening so that the concerned agency can respond with programs that consider the issues involved and meet the public's needs.

The purpose of this study of Kansas City neighborhood residents' perceptions and needs was to determine if differences do exist in varying socio-economic neighborhoods. It was also to develop a program that responds to the needs of those groups that could benefit by the activities of urban preservation.

For a non-profit preservation organization to be effective in programs that benefit urban neighborhood residents, differences in group-type neighborhoods must be recognized. Low socio-economic groups have a greater need for assistance in older neighborhoods so that they are provided with suitable housing and a "quality environment." One of the objectives of any non-profit agency should be to reach the disadvantaged with their programs. Preservation organizations can best meet this challenge with assistance to help meet the housing needs of those whose needs are greatest.